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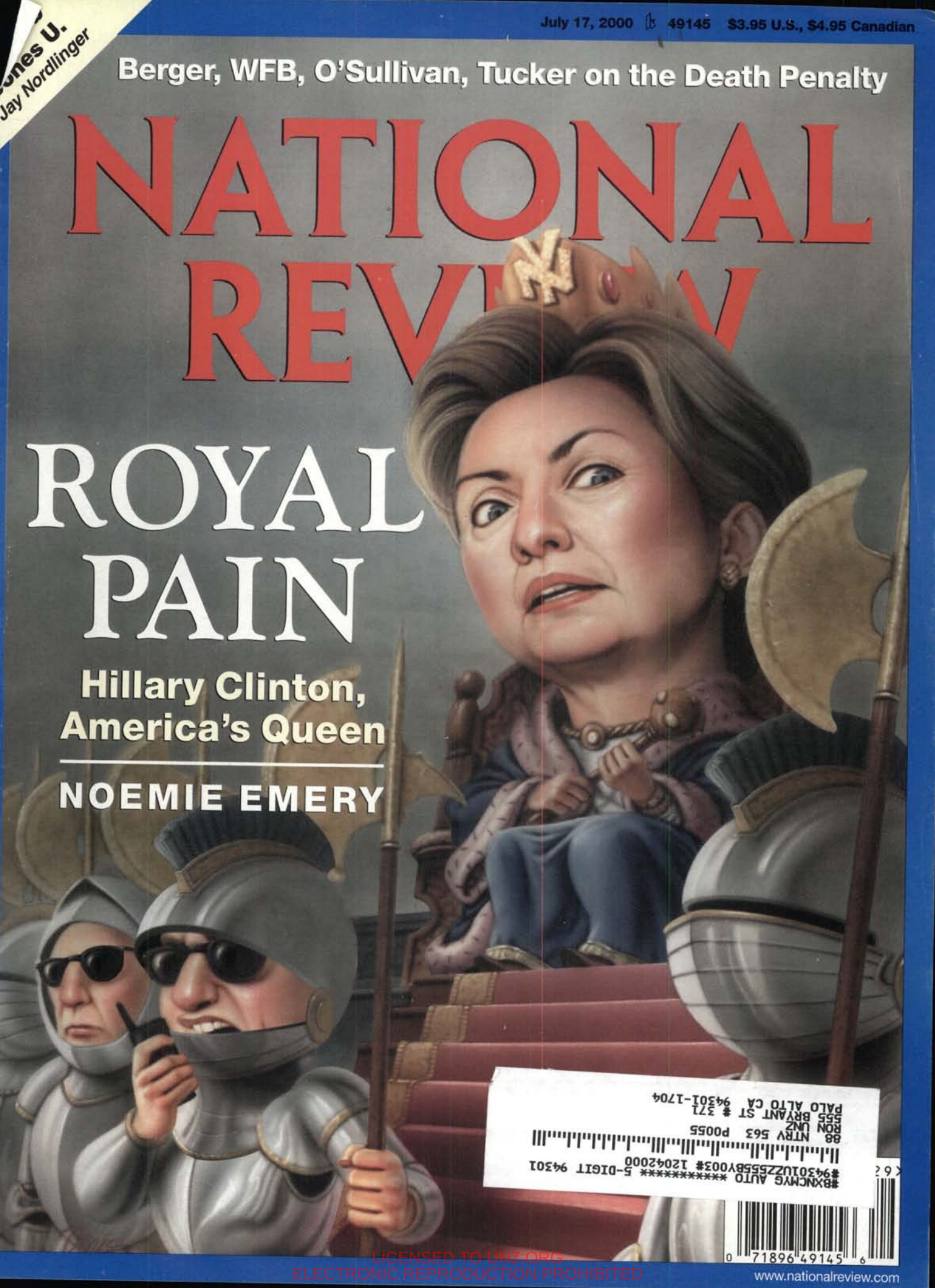
Jay Nordlinger

Berger, WFB, O'Sullivan, Tucker on the Death Penalty

NATIONAL REVIEW



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Hillary Clinton, America's Queen

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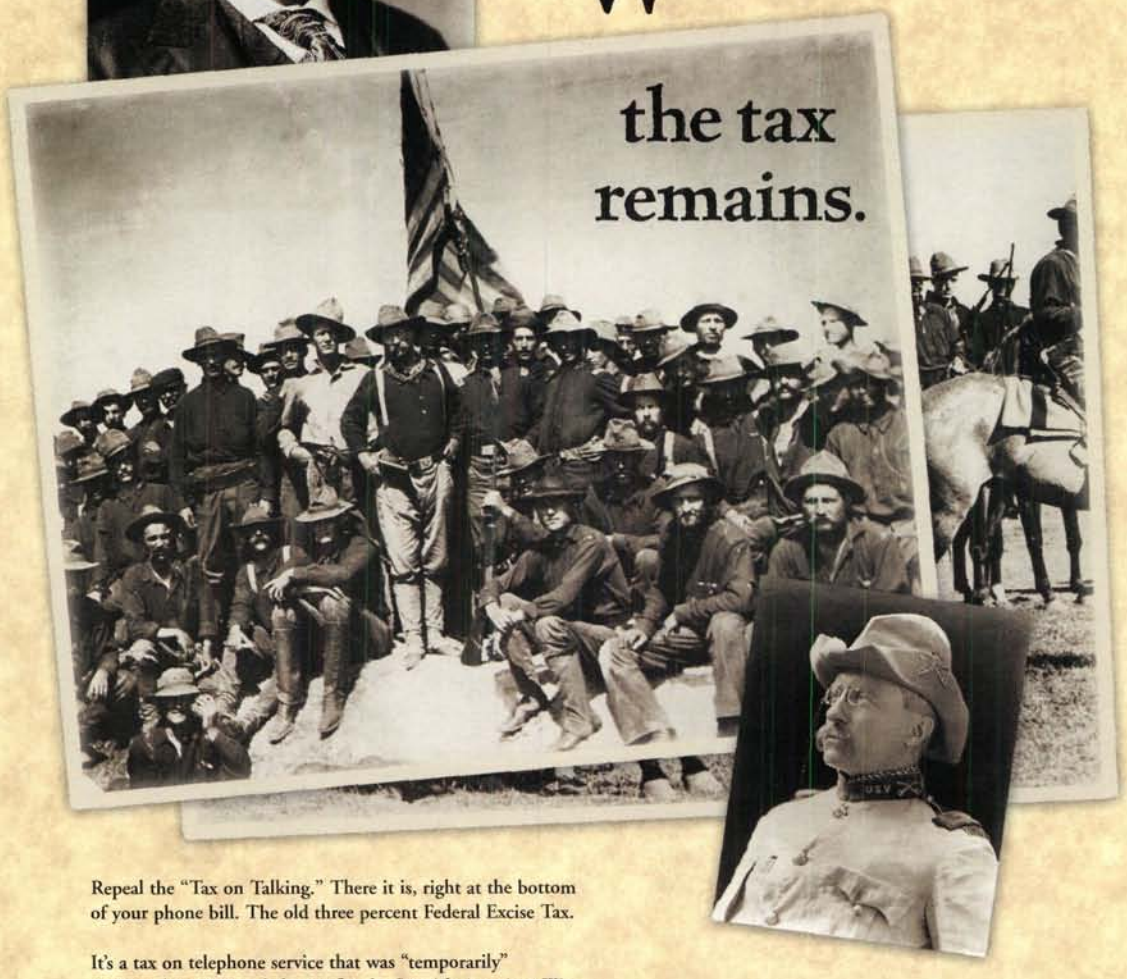

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■ LETTERS ■

REMEMBERING BILL SIMON

It is difficult to add to the moving tribute to Bill Simon that his friend Bill Buckley penned ("The Week," July 3), but I would like to offer a few observations from my long relationship with him at the John M. Olin Foundation.

Bill Simon's formal connection to the foundation began in the late 1970s. John M. Olin was a prominent industrialist who, later in life, became an equally prominent philanthropist, conservationist, and benefactor. He admired Bill Simon. By 1977, Olin was in his 80s and wanted to ensure that his philanthropy would be directed after his death by someone who shared his belief in freedom and limited government, and who was not afraid to support programs and initiatives that might be unpopular in elite circles. So shortly after Bill Simon left government in 1977, Olin asked him to assume the presidency of his grant-making foundation.

At that time, Bill Simon had countless offers for employment, speaking engagements, and philanthropic and charitable causes to consider. But he understood the vital importance of the John M. Olin Foundation. He saw it as a force to strengthen the free-enterprise system in America, which he knew was facing an intellectual attack from abroad by socialism, and at home from America's elite institutions, which were increasingly hostile to America and freedom.

Olin had created his foundation in 1953 to support philanthropic causes and educational initiatives, but the grant-making had been pursued largely informally. Olin brought Bill Simon aboard to create an ongoing structure. Under Simon's leadership, the foundation established a formal mission, implemented a non-bureaucratic structure, hired a staff, and brought systematic organization to grant-making. Under the leadership of Bill Simon, the John M. Olin Foundation would support ideas, projects, and educational programs that were consistent with the American tradition of free enterprise and limited government. In 1978, Simon outlined his philanthropic mission in his best-selling book, *A Time for Truth*. He urged businessmen to support a "counter-intelligentsia" of academics, writers, and thinkers who would defend freedom and pursue research that would strengthen the free-enterprise system. John M. Olin passed away in 1982, leaving Bill Simon to continue his legacy.

Simon knew what the foundation was established to achieve, and with the grants program, he set about achieving it. In a January 1992 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Waldemar A. Nielson, an adviser to several major foundations and a noted observer of philanthropy, encouraged liberal foundations to emulate the focused strategy of the Olin Foundation: "Look at the mush and incoherence coming out of other foundations. In comparison, Olin is a sharp-edged, attacking machine."

Bill Simon may have left government in 1977 after four tough and demanding years as energy czar and secretary of the treasury, at a time when the Nixon and Ford administrations contended with Watergate, the Arab oil embargo, and inflation. But his subsequent work in business and philanthropy made him one of the most influential leaders of the last 20 years.

He often said that one of his roles was to be the interpreter of John M. Olin's philosophy. In this role, he was far more successful than Olin himself or any other conservative in the late 1970s could have imagined. His family, friends, colleagues, and country are all the better for Bill Simon's service.

James Piereson
Executive Director
John M. Olin Foundation

OUR CAPITAL DEBATE

On reading Carl M. Cannon's "The Problem with the Chair" (July 3), I was struck more by the impression that there is a greater need for reform in the judicial system than for eliminating the death penalty. Zealous prosecutors who are more intent on convictions than on justice are the problem. While sentencing an innocent man to death is a tragedy, the more alarming problem appears to be prosecutors who knowingly go after innocent men, even manufacturing confessions from them. The problem here is not the finality of the death penalty, but the flaws that have crept into our judicial system, allowing a man

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Al Bedran, UPS Manager
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to be wrongfully convicted whether his sentence includes death or merely imprisonment.

Shawn Parrish
Lynchburg, Va.

Superb! One of the best critiques of capital punishment I've ever read.

Hiawatha Bray
Boston, Mass.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *For further responses to Carl Cannon's article on the death penalty, see pp. 42- 45 and p. 16.*

ROSIE SCENARIO

Kudos to Jay Nordlinger for skewering the political activism of Rosie O'Donnell ("Rosie O'Donnell, Political Activist," July 3). My only concern is that Mr. Nordlinger was overly respectful of Ms. O'Donnell's intelligence. Certainly, Rosie and many other liberal celebrities surrender any claim to intelligence when they subordinate thoughtful and sound reasoning to emotional diatribes, uninformed by facts.

Rosie proves more insidious when we consider two realities. First, she and other people have a profound impact on our young, who accept the opinions of these people as gospel. Second, rigidly ideological liberals like O'Donnell and Barbra Streisand now determine who works in Hollywood. Shades of the blacklist of the Fifties! Thus, political celebrity now runs our brave new society, all out of proportion to any rightful claims to power.

J. J. Ryan
Yonkers, N.Y.

ON PUERTO RICO

Unfortunately, Richard Brookhiser is uninformed ("Unmanifest Destiny," May 19). Not only are those of us born in Puerto Rico American citizens by birthright, we have been American citizens since 1917. In fact, Puerto Ricans are and have been American citizens longer than the peoples of any other territory, without a decision by Congress of what their ultimate status will be.

Therefore, to ask "What is best for us?" can be viewed only in the larger context of what is best for all Americans, including the almost 4 million who live in Puerto Rico.

For comparative purposes, there are 25 states of the union where the number of American citizens is smaller than the number of American citizens who reside in Puerto Rico. The fact that this substantial number of citizens are subject to all laws passed by Congress, and yet have no voice or vote in that process, is not just undemocratic, but un-American.

How can we be the defenders of representative democracy in the world when a large number of American citizens are disenfranchised? This second-class status is unacceptable.

In the 1998 plebiscite, the current colonial "commonwealth" status received less than one tenth of 1 percent of the vote. There is no consent of the governed to continue in this colonial relationship, and Congress needs to step up to the plate and offer the American citizens living in Puerto Rico what it has offered the 37 previous territories: statehood or independence. Anything less is colonial and un-American.

Herbert W. Brown III
Citizens Educational Foundation
San Juan, P.R.

RICHARD BROOKHISER REPLIES: *Puerto Rican citizenship, like all other laws relating to Puerto Rico, is wholly at the disposal of Congress, because Puerto Rico is in fact, if not in name, a territory. I too am disturbed by the anomaly of Puerto Rico's lack of full self-government. If most Puerto Ricans are as disturbed as Mr. Brown, then they should be granted independence.*

THE METHODIST POSITION

I noted this comment in the June 5 issue of NATIONAL REVIEW ("For the Record"): "[The] United Methodist Church, largest U.S. pro-abortion denomination, votes to oppose partial-birth abortion." You are incorrect in using the term "pro-abortion."

The United Methodist Church's Social Principles state: "Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion. We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures and with pastoral counsel."

Helen D. Tousignant
Concord, Calif.

STRANGE LANGUAGE

Michael Knox Beran's "Tongues of Tin" (July 3) aptly expounds on the power of the spoken word. Beran notes the various word choices and oratorical styles that have been used by politicians past and present. He also notes the unusual body language now being displayed on the campaign trail.

Why do some politicians appear uncomfortable out there? The answer is simple: Because they are. It's hard to be oneself when voicing a particular view yet believing another.

Mike Vinson
McMinnville, Tenn.

ASSENT OF MAN

I'm certain I can speak for most conservative scientists and applaud the appreciation by Steve Sailer of E. O. Wilson's seminal text, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* ("Darwin's Progress," June 19). Evolution actually happened, and the truth about life has long been a better friend of the Right than of the Left. For too long, conservative pundits have felt themselves constrained by populist anti-intellectualism when it comes to evolution. Conservatives certainly need not fear it.

Mark A. Wilson
Wooster, Ohio

NO QUESTION

Richard Lowry says, "For W., it's the right time, and he has most of the right themes. What remains to be seen is whether he's the right man" ("Slow and Steady," July 3).

Oh, he's the right man, all right. Together with the foregoing, it is sufficient that he is neither Bill Clinton nor Al Gore.

Bill Hart

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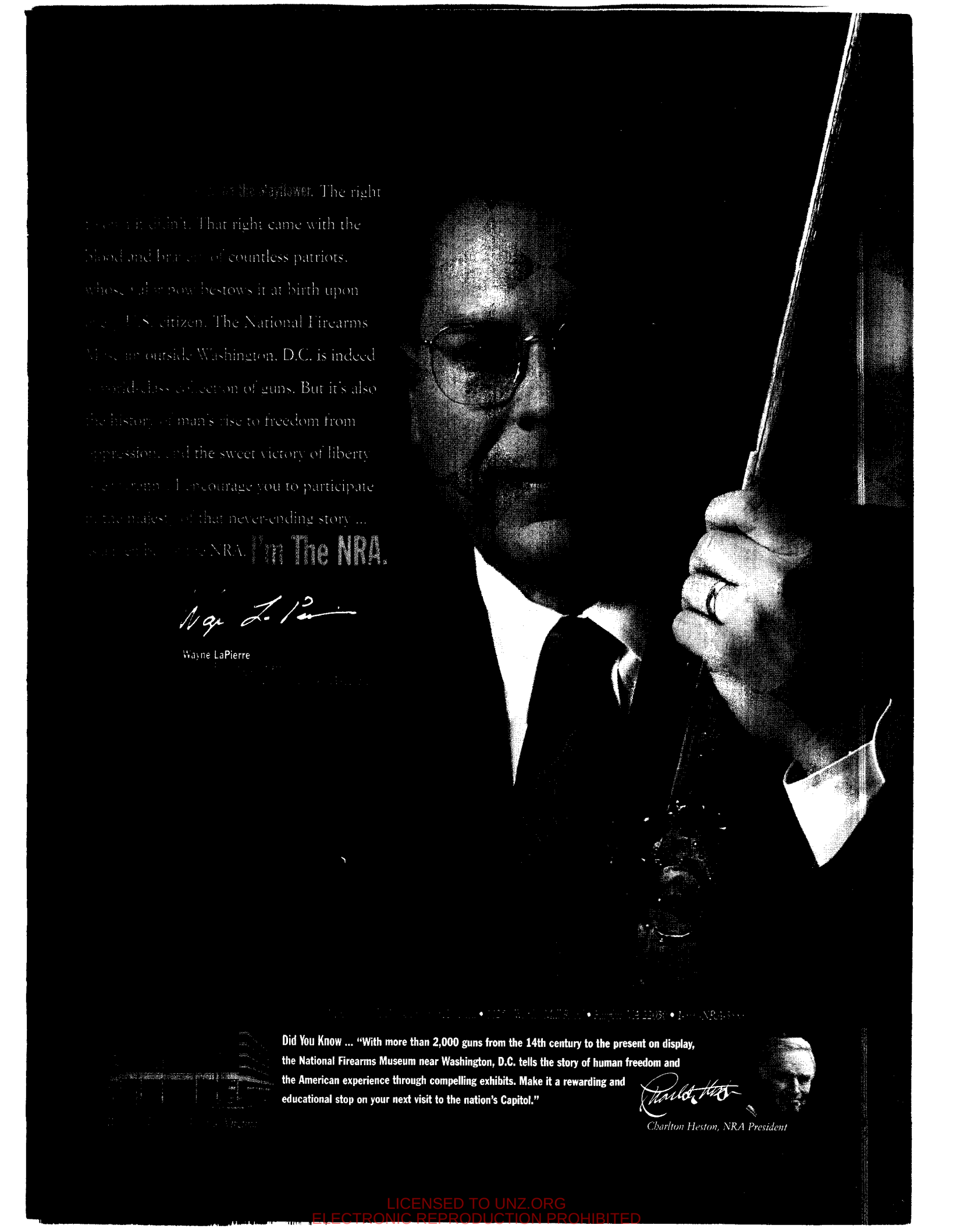

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Wayne LaPierre

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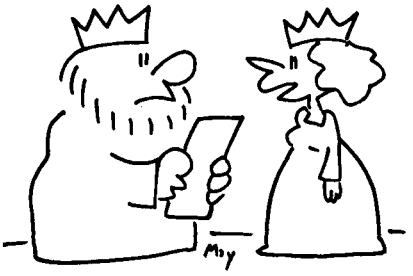
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ **Ron Faucheux** of *Campaigns & Elections* handicaps Democratic field of potential ticket-mates, gives 5-to-1 odds to both Sen. **Evan Bayh** (Ind.) and Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (Calif.). . . . Rising gas prices and continuing controversy at nuclear labs imperil energy secretary **Bill Richardson**'s veep dreams. . . . Lawyers for **Dick Gephardt** "are now checking to see if he can run for both the House seat and vice president," says former Gephardt staffer **George Stephanopoulos** on ABC. . . . **Michael Barone** of *U.S. News & World Report*, on *Hardball*: "Both political parties are looking for the same candidate. Both of them would like a Hispanic woman from a Great Lakes state who has raised a large family and has extensive foreign-policy experience."

■ Vice President **Al Gore**'s internal analysis says he's leading **George W. Bush** in states worth 194 electoral votes, with Bush ahead in states worth 133, according to *USA Today*. Bush camp says it's ahead in states worth 266 electoral votes, with Gore up in states worth 136 (needed to win: 270). . . . Gore on missile technology, in *New York Times* interview: "You're taking me outside my depths." On the Microsoft case: "I do not claim expertise." . . . Bishop **James C. Timlin** withdraws invitation for Gore to speak at Catholic hospital in Scranton, Pa., citing views on abortion. . . . In *20/20* interview, Gore talks about whether he invented the Internet: "I did not, and I wish I hadn't managed to give the impression that I did, either." . . . **James Fallows**, in *Atlantic Monthly*: "Gore is manifestly willing to lie for political convenience." . . . Labor leaders respond poorly to Gore's choice of commerce secretary **Bill Daley**, who led fight for China trade bill, as campaign chairman. AFL-CIO's **John Sweeney** says Daley is "squarely on the opposite side of working families." . . . After months of promising they wouldn't seek a direct subsidy from the city, Democratic leaders tell Los Angeles they need $4 million for national convention, reports *Los Angeles Times*.

■ *The Nation* unearths 1978 report by Lubbock *Avalanche-Journal* on Bush's run for Congress: "Bush said he opposes the pro-life amendment favored by [his GOP primary opponent] **Reese** and favors leaving up to a woman and her doctor the abortion question." Bush campaign calls article "a misinterpretation" of Bush's views. . . . New York financier **Ted Forstmann** offers to donate $500,000 to each of Bush's and Gore's favorite charities if they participate in debate on education. . . . Republicans complain that Election Day holidays, written into UAW contracts for this year and 2002, put them at competitive disadvantage. . . . *Family Circle* readers to vote in Third National Bipartisan Cookie Cook-off, putting **Laura Bush** recipe for Texas Governor's Mansion Cowboy Cookies up against **Tipper Gore**'s ginger snaps.



"Nice speech, except I'd hardly call a world war a 'youthful indiscretion.'"

■ Indiana governor Frank O'Bannon (D.), in election battle with Republican Rep. **David McIntosh**, suspends the state's gas tax for two months. . . . Left-wing activist **Lenora Fulani** quits **Pat Buchanan**'s presidential campaign. . . . Green party candidate **Ralph Nader**'s net worth estimated at nearly $4 million, but he does not own car or real estate and donates 80 percent of earnings to nonprofit causes. . . . Nader, in the *American Prospect*: "I don't think it's very interesting just to have me and Buchanan debate." Too much agreement? . . . California could gain 9 seats in House and New York may lose 5 by 2020, according to Population Reference Bureau. . . . ABC says it won't preempt pre-season football games to cover first night of either political convention, but will provide updates at halftime. . . . GOP shows interest in recruiting retiring San Francisco 49ers quarterback **Steve Young** for political office. . . . License plates in District of Columbia will soon add motto: "Taxation Without Representation." . . . Former Louisiana governor **Edwin W. Edwards** hires **Alan Dershowitz** to work on appeal of federal-racketeering conviction. . . . Sen. **Phil Gramm** (R., Texas) on a **Ronald Reagan** coin, according to Cox News Service: "That's something I'm going to make happen."

■ **Mitch McConnell** (R., Ky.) on First Lady's need for negative ads, on *Meet the Press*: "If she were running against Bozo the Clown, she'd have to make New Yorkers hate the circus." . . . In *Washington Times*, **Al Sharpton** warns Hillary!: "She has a small window here before people will say that she's taking the vote for granted and has not been able to come back with a post-**Giuliani** strategy." . . . ROTC fails to commission enough new officers for fifth year in row. . . . Half of all GI gas masks may be faulty, reports *USA Today*.

■ India tests medium-range missile. . . . British Tory leader **William Hague** meets with Bush adviser **Marvin Olasky** to learn about "compassionate conservatism." . . . Olympic officials in Australia downplay rumors of terrorist **Osama bin Ladin** targeting Summer Games in Sydney. . . . Children's hospital in New Zealand bans God and angel characters from performances of **Oscar Wilde**'s *The Happy Prince*. . . Prince **Charles Napoleon**, a descendant of the emperor's younger brother **Jerome Bonaparte**, runs for town mayor in Corsica. . . . Denmark and Sweden open $4 billion, 10-mile bridge connecting them.

■ When London's *Mail on Sunday* asks **Monica Lewinsky** whether she has interest in reacquiring and selling infamous blue dress, she replies: "What sort of girl do you think I am?" **NR**

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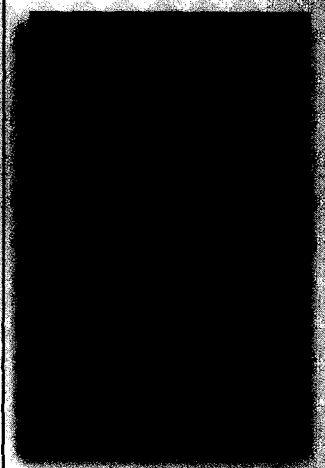
Get serious.



Roger Kimball engages in this intellectual autopsy on the Sixties through incisive portraits of the architects of America's cultural revolution—among them, Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Timothy Leary, Susan Sontag, and Charles Reich. In his examination of their lives and works, Kimball discovers a road map of wrong turns, dead ends and blind alleys leading directly to the present.

"After reading this book, you will never look at the cultural figures of the 60s in the same way again."

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--Weekly Standard

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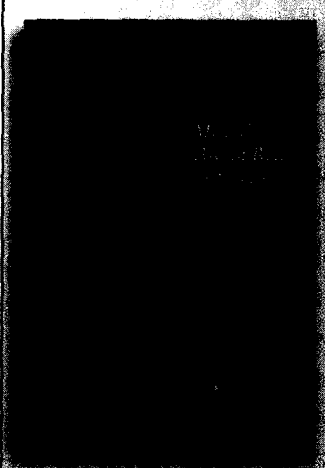

***Creating Equals: My Fight Against Race Preferences* is about Ward Connerly's effort to find that undiscovered country that lies "beyond race." But it is also about his unique and confident American journey, the powerful testament of a man who dared to challenge the way this country does its racial business. Connerly may be affirmative action's worst nightmare, but he is also a brave and moderate voice who has changed our collective face.**

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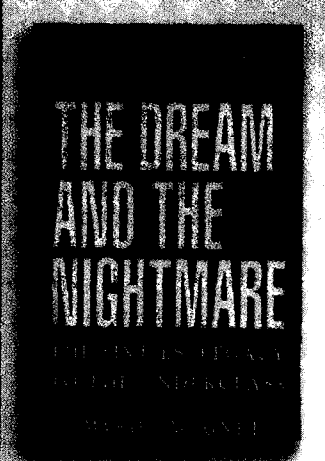

On January 5, 2000, the editors of the Wall Street Journal asked Governor George Bush what was the most important book he'd ever read, aside from the Bible.

Here's what Bush said:
"The Dream and the Nightmare by Myron Magnet crystallized for me the impact the failed culture of the Sixties had on our values and society. It helped create dependency on government, undermined family, and eroded values which had stood the test of time and which are critical if we want a decent and hopeful tomorrow for every single American."

In a front page article on June 12, 2000, the New York Times referred to The Dream and the Nightmare as one of the "first building blocks of the 'compassionate conservative' platform."

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THE WEEK

■ What's the matter with Rick Lazio's friends? His $13,500 profit came from an initial investment of $2,300. If they'd steered him into cattle futures, he could have made $243,800.

■ Another Justice Department official has urged Janet Reno to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate Al Gore for violating campaign-finance laws in the 1996 election—and for lying about it during the subsequent investigation. This recommendation from Robert Conrad, head of the task force looking into these matters, follows those of his predecessor Charles LaBella and FBI director Louis Freeh. It is obvious that Justice is itself incapable of investigating Gore. A special prosecutor, however, would in all likelihood simply bury the story for months, maybe years, and then issue some inconclusive report. (That's what the independent counsel has just done in the Travelgate case.) Sen. Arlen Specter's investigatory committee should take the lead in holding the executive branch accountable. George W. Bush should campaign against the corruption of the Clinton-Gore years. The only way to end the scandals is to end this crowd's stay in Washington.

■ The otherwise hapless Gore has made one shrewd move recently. With his new retirement-security plan, he has abandoned his earlier tactic of denigrating the stock market. His plan offers to help people enjoy the high returns of the market with a new system of individual accounts, while also "protecting" Social Security. A *Newsweek* poll found that 67 percent of the public favored the idea, compared with 51 percent who favored George W. Bush's plan. The Gore plan enjoyed support from senior citizens, too, as Bush's did not. For many low- and middle-income workers, each plan would offer roughly the same financial benefits. So Bush ought to expand his pro-investment program to outbid Gore, as Richard Nadler argues in this issue (p. 18). If Bush instead continues simply to attack the Gore plan, his hard-won advantage on Social Security will vanish.

■ Ralph Nader, as expected, won the Green party nomination and, buoyed by speculation about his possible marginal effect in key states (California, Michigan), plans to run an aggressive campaign, bashing both parties. Don't hold on to your hats. Third parties always fade in the stretch. Even George Wallace and Ross Perot (the first time out)—the only recent third-party candidates to break into double digits—fell off from their campaign peaks. Nader, who has the charm of an East German bureaucrat, is fashioning an appeal to the hard Left, even though the lesson of American exceptionalism is that there isn't much of one in this country. The only candidate who might really suffer because his supporters find Nader's rants against the "insatiable corporate culture" compelling is Pat Buchanan.

■ A new poll by the *Los Angeles Times* finds that 54 percent of the public wants abortion to be illegal, or legal only in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother. A majority of Americans, that is, takes a position identical to, or to the right of, Bush and the Republican platform. Support for *Roe* v. *Wade* has fallen, with 43 percent for and 42 percent against. When informed Bush opposed abortion, 27 percent of respondents said they were more likely to vote for him, only 13 percent that they were less likely—a trend that prevailed among self-described "moderates." Gore's support for abortion rights, on the other hand, lost him some votes. And Bush himself would lose votes, according to the poll, if his running mate favored abortion rights. The political obstacles to the pro-life movement remain large: The fact that more than 65 percent of the public in the *Times* poll did not know the position of either Bush or Gore is a testament to its aversion to thinking about the subject. But a "pro-choice majority" is one obstacle that does not exist.

■ Elián González has been returned to his father in Cuba . . . which is to say, to Fidel Castro, self-appointed father of that nation. The lad and his sperm donor had actually sent a Father's Day card to *El Jefe* from the estate of whichever Clinton pal was last to play host to them. The seven-month saga of this unfortunate child revealed a number of things about America, none of them reassuring. We learned, or were reminded of, the following. That most Americans do not know what life is like in a Communist country. That an energetic executive supported uncritically by the mass media, and with a well-drilled party in Congress and a judiciary well-seeded with hacks, can do anything it pleases to Americans and their liberties, under any flimsy pretext it can think up on the spur of the moment. That our left-wing elites actually *like* Castro and his system and will go to any lengths to ingratiate themselves with him, regardless of the interests of their own nation. And that penniless immigrants who work hard for decades to establish themselves as middle-class Americans are regarded with contempt and loathing by those same elites, especially when they manifest signs of religious belief. No doubt these lessons, like Elián González himself, will soon be forgotten, leaving us with the melancholy, extremely un-Clintonian

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Counterrevolution in the Classroom

William Damon is a senior fellow, Hoover Institution; director, Stanford Center on Adolescence; and professor of education, Stanford University.

Those of us who dwell on campuses and read the *Chronicle of Higher Education* have noticed a recent counterrevolution in the teaching of college humanities. The winds have shifted away from the "deconstructionist" criticism that uncovered hidden themes of race, class, and gender to the more direct "teaching of the text." Aesthetics have become popular again. Instructors have once again taken up the charge of showing students why and how people can perceive beauty in a Shakespearian sonnet or a Rembrandt portrait. Back in style are the profound lessons of truth and meaning.

Why the change? It seems that market forces do work. Students were checking out from obscure, agenda-driven, negative courses dominated by critical theory, finding little reason to sit through the lectures or read the assignments. If the classic texts were seen as neither beautiful nor true, but were taught simply as indications of exploitations long past, why bother with them? The return of *appreciation* for the texts is reawakening student interest.

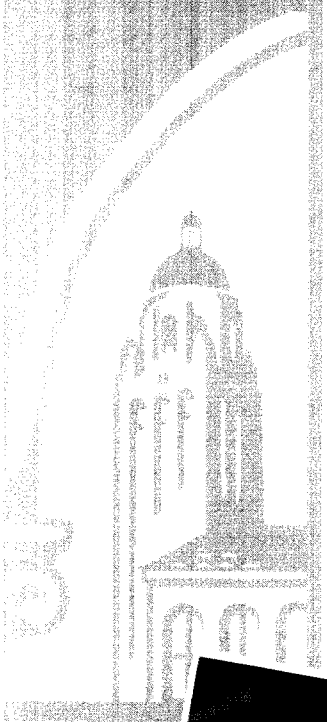
A similar counterrevolution is needed in teaching historical and civic understanding to elementary and secondary school students. **The rage among trendsetters is "cosmopolitan education," a notion that sets itself in opposition to traditional values such as patriotism.** One leading educator, for example, urges schools to avoid instilling "irrational" patriotism "full of color and intensity and passion," claiming that the notion of national belonging "reinforces this kind of irrationality, by lending to what is an accident of history a false air of moral weight and glory." Combined with a teaching of history that emphasizes our country's sins rather than its achievements, the message that students are receiving is negative. My high school daughter (and even her young history teacher, I fear) know far more about how settlers mistreated Native Americans than about how they created the Bill of Rights or outlawed the slave trade.

Critical thinking is essential for any citizen in a democracy, and schools must foster it. But when we *begin* with a critical tone and lean on it repeatedly, students become disaffected. A sense of positive identification is a prerequisite for constructive engagement. Young people need to *care about* something enough to bother criticizing it and improving it.

Young people have turned away from civic engagement to an extent never before witnessed in our society. Voting among 18–24-year-olds, their interest in political campaigns, even their willingness to run for school offices, have all declined sharply over the past twenty-five years. To foster in our young a positive identification with their civil society, we need to give them compelling reasons to become attached.

We must begin by telling students about the best of our traditions and the finest episodes in our history and why so many of their forbearers cherished those traditions enough to devote and even sacrifice their lives to preserve them. We must show the young why patriotism in its noblest sense—open, inclusive, the heart and soul of our free and democratic society—is a virtue and not a vice.

— William Damon



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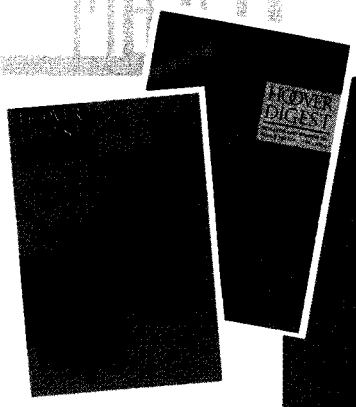

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consolation that: "The truth is great, and shall prevail, when none cares whether it prevail or not."

■ The Supreme Court ordered a Texas school district to drop its policy of letting students elect a speaker to "solemnize" high-school football games with remarks that could, but need not, include prayer. The Court said this policy would be an unconstitutional "establishment of religion." In dissent, Chief Justice William Rehnquist noted that the Court's opinion "bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life." So it does. But it also exhibits a pervasive suspicion of the workings of a decentralized democracy. The Court struck down the policy before it was even implemented, not waiting to see whether it led to routine sectarian outbursts. It called the policy a "sham" intended to reach that result. Even that worst-case scenario, however, would hardly amount to a theocracy—except on the slippery-slope assumption that religious nuts will take a mile if given an inch. The decision, finally, exemplifies an unjustifiably deep distrust of local self-rule, a distrust so common in our jurisprudence that the justices no longer even notice it.

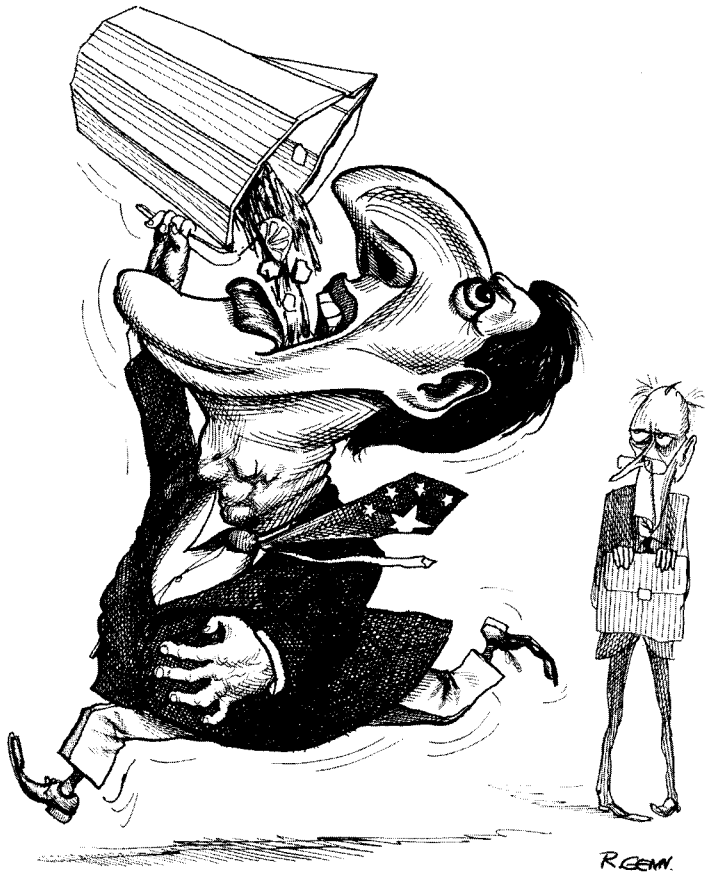
■ Coupled with that distrust is a marked inclination for the Court to rule in its own favor. The latest example comes in a case concerning the famous *Miranda* ruling of 1966. The Court has never made it clear whether the *Miranda* warning—more properly, the inadmissibility as evidence of confessions not preceded by the warning—is mandated by the Constitution. It is hard to argue that it is. So at times, the Court has suggested that the *Miranda* rules are merely a means to the end of meeting the actual constitutional requirement, which is that confessions be voluntary. But, as Justice Antonin Scalia notes, that would mean "that this Court has the power, not merely to apply the Constitution, but to expand it, imposing what it regards as useful 'prophylactic' restrictions upon Congress and the States. That is an immense and frightening antidemocratic power, and it does not exist." The Court's most recent decision squares the circle by being coy. It neither says that the Constitution requires *Miranda* nor announces the doctrine Scalia fears. It just says that Congress and the states must obey *Miranda* because . . . because the Court has spoken. Next case.

■ Still, it could be worse. Just before finishing its term, the Court also ruled aid to parochial schools constitutional and upheld the Boy Scouts' right to exclude homosexuals as scoutmasters. Both were good decisions, though both could be overturned if a President Gore were to name two justices. But let's pause to reflect on just how much has been on the Court's docket. In one two-week period, the Court made important decisions about police procedures, hate crimes, education policy, election rules, and partial-birth abortion (see "Ruling Without Mercy," p. 15). So what's the point of having elections? Oh right: to pick the man who will pick our real rulers.

■ Peter McWilliams, computer whiz, libertarian, and wit, died at 50, choking on his vomit. His nausea was caused by the chemotherapy he underwent for AIDS-related lymphoma. His choking was caused by a federal prosecution for growing marijuana. McWilliams, like hundreds of other chemotherapy patients, found that pot relieved the distress that conventional anti-nausea drugs did not. He grew plants, sold them to medical cooperatives in California, and was arrested. During his trial he was not allowed to mention his condition, or Proposition 215, one of eight passed in the nation so far that decriminalize medical marijuana. While he awaited sentencing, he was required, by the terms of his bail, to pass a weekly urine test. With the death of the criminal, the testing will be discontinued. Not the outrage of sensible folk at our absurd and Draconian pot laws.

■ Kim Jong Il emerged smiling at the world like a North Korean Cosmo Kramer, his shock of unruly hair standing bolt upright, an expression of otherworldly confusion on his face.

A Real Swill Guy



Vice President Gore says that he was not in the room when key fundraising matters were discussed—he had consumed so much iced tea, he had to be elsewhere. Iced-tea-gate threatens to be an issue in the fall campaign, but we have no photos. Thankfully, Roman Genn provides us a glimpse.

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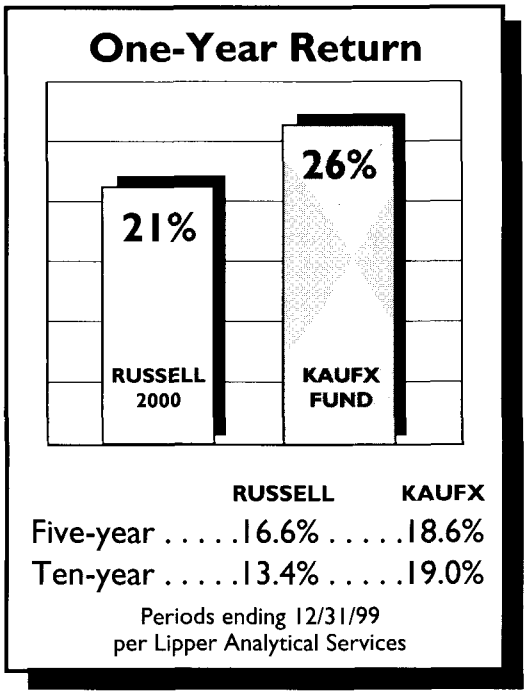
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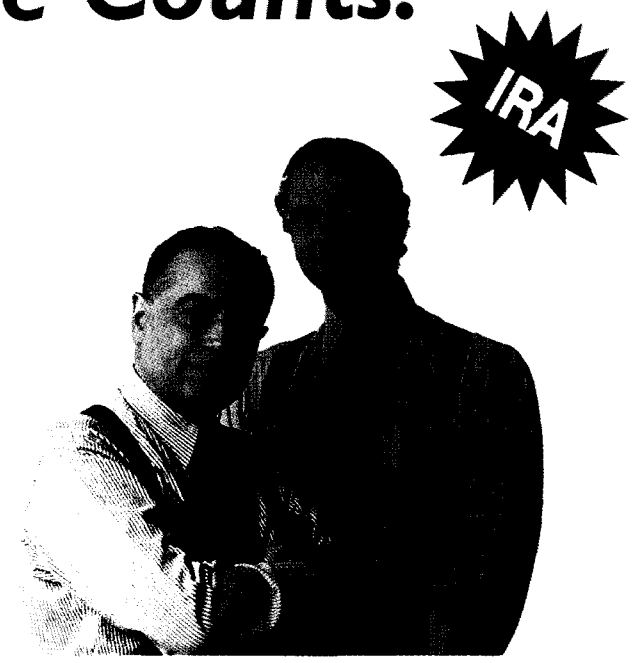

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The Economist ran his photo under the apt legend "Greetings, Earthlings." Critics of missile defense were less cheeky, seizing on the Dear Leader's vaguely friendly statements (e.g., "I hope you're comfortable") at a summit with South Korea's Kim Dae Jung as evidence that the rogue-state missile threat no longer exists. Needless to say, the words of a Stalinist should never be accepted on faith. Nor would even a suddenly pacific North Korea eliminate all rogue-state threats, since the proliferation of missile technology—to which our amiable North Korean totalitarian has contributed so much—guarantees that a determined outlaw state can bulk up on its missile capability very quickly. And enemies have a way of sneaking up on us (witness Iran in 1979, Iraq in 1991). Kim Jong Il should not be allowed, while he takes a break from inflicting famine and pestilence on his people, to charm us out of our missile interceptors.

■ Did we say "rogue state"? Sorry. The State Department has dropped this term in favor of "states of concern." A "rogue state" used to mean one that blew up airliners, made vats of anthrax, and tried to sneak-build a Bomb. "State of concern" is much blander, and almost of universal application, except in sub-Saharan Africa, where the nation-state has yet to make its appearance and what structures do exist appear to be imploding. To be sure, we are "concerned" about almost everything: Russia and China, Peru, Mexico, "Europe" (but maybe not Canada, Fiji, or Iceland). Perhaps the new coinage reflects the idea that globalization will nudge the former "rogues" toward more amicable behavior. A pleasant thought, like the sign "Gentlemen" on a restroom.

■ Congress passed a $1.3 billion aid package, including American instructors and 60 helicopters, to help Colombia fight its cocaine lords. This is a raise of the $309 million given in 1999, and the $50 million in 1998. There is real doubt that the Colombian government wants to fight; the chief of police, Gen. Rosso Jose Serrano, has quit, sickened by the toll on his men. The narcoterrorists are a symptom, not the problem. Cocaine production flourishes because nearly half the country is effectively outside the law, run by Marxist rebels who resemble Peru's Shining Path. Colombia has historically been rent by violence: Recurring civil wars have taken hundreds of thousands of lives over the last hundred years. Even in its palmiest days of Latin American intervention, the United States never tried to police Colombia (the most we did was peel off Panama to dig the canal). America will not solve its drug problem by flushing a billion down this chute.

■ Vladimir Gusinsky is, roughly speaking, Russia's Rupert Murdoch. The Moscow prosecutor invited him to step along to his office as a witness in a certain case, and promptly detained him on charges of fraud. Like everybody else with the chance for it, he supposedly acquired state assets at cut-rate prices in the great privatization giveaway. And so off with him into the Butyrka, a prison familiar to Russians famous and infamous since the days of the czars. What a regard for the continuity of history these people have! And how they enjoy these little tricks too! In one of those coincidences usually qualified as "sheer," Gusinsky's various media outlets are critical of President Vladimir Putin's person and policies. Out of the country on ceremonial state visits in Spain and Germany, Putin was gracious enough to say that he didn't think Gusinsky ought to have gone to jail. For the time being, and pending a showdown, Gusinsky is out again, thoroughly drenched with crocodile tears.

■ "You have to accept responsibility for your mistakes and learn from them." That's what Jane Fonda told Oprah Winfrey in a recent interview, adding that she would "go to [her] grave regretting" the Communist propaganda picture she posed for during the Vietnam War, sitting in a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun. "[I]t hurt so many soldiers. . . . It was the most horrible thing I could possibly have done. It was just thoughtless. I wasn't thinking. . . ." Noted. But Ms. Fonda hasn't thought about what the Communists did to so many Vietnamese civilians; we'll wait for the next interview.

■ New York's Gay Pride parade was met by a small contingent of religious protesters outside St. Patrick's Cathedral, holding banners proclaiming homosexuality a sin. Along with everyone else, the protesters seem to have forgotten that *pride* is a sin—one of the Seven Deadlies, in fact. By declaring themselves "proud" (of something which, they will hasten to explain, they cannot help), New York's homosexual marchers have already shed an inhibition more essential to a healthy personality, and a well-ordered society, than any mere matter of sexual preference. It would be nice to think that someone, somewhere is planning a Gay Humility parade . . . but we doubt it.

■ Take a fairly orderly society with strong social sanctions—internalized by most members of all classes and races—against physical violence towards women. Apply three or four decades of blather about "oppression," "sexism," and "discrimination." Add to the mix an unemployment rate among working-class young men higher than that among college-educated women. Blend in some militant feminism, with its outlawing of chivalry, its proscription even of the word "lady" or of any suggestion that a woman might not be fully capable of doing any task a man can do. Marinate in a widespread acceptance of bastardy, so that legions of young men have no model for how a man should treat a woman. Stir in a degraded black youth culture ("youth culture"!—the most egregious oxymoron of the 20th century!) in which practically all forms of decency, courtesy, and self-restraint are sneered at as "acting white," this sneering being backed by a musical (well, rhythmic) accompaniment in which the usual terms for a woman are "bitch" and "whore." Heat over the fires of a sex-drenched entertainment industry, in which the most private of functions and practices are the raw material of public chatter. Season with alcohol and marijuana. What do you get? New York City's Central Park following the Puerto Rico Day parade.

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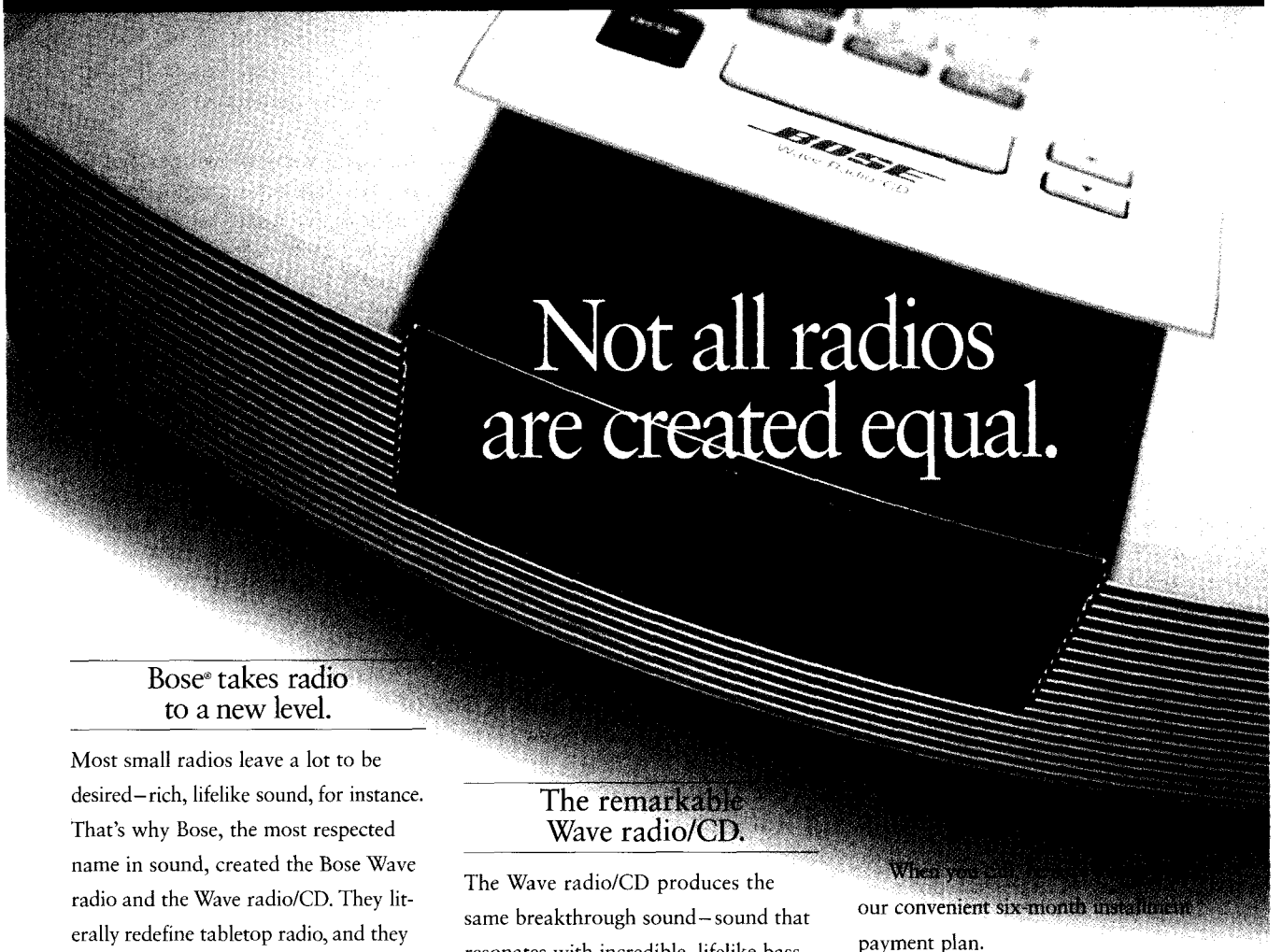

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Price and/or payment plan subject to change without notice. Frank Beacham, *Radio World*, 12/93.

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■ Absolutely axiomatic is the proposition that the highest priority of government is the protection of the lives and property of the law-abiding. Yet several thousand rioters in Los Angeles celebrated the Lakers' NBA championship by vandalizing and burglarizing businesses, destroying automobiles, shattering windows, and setting fires. The police did next to nothing, making only eleven arrests. "I think the police acted very responsibly, with restraint," pronounced Mayor Richard Riordan. Actually, they acted very irresponsibly, as the morning-after wreckage eloquently testified.

■ Planning to take your kids to McDonald's for a Happy Meal? Beware: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has launched an "Unhappy Meal" campaign, designed to teach the young ones about animal cruelty. It could be coming soon to a McDonald's near you. PETA's "Unhappy Meal" boxes feature a picture of a bloody, severed cow's head and descriptions of the ways cattle and chickens are slaughtered, all under the tag line "McCruelty to Go." The young ones also receive toy farm animals with slashed throats and a Ronald McDonald doll wielding a butcher's knife. Explains PETA's Ingrid Newkirk: "Ronald McDonald isn't a clown, he's a murderer." Needless to say, this is shocking news: There's *beef* in a McDonald's hamburger?

■ Korea was a containment war—growing out of the strategy adopted by the Truman administration of meeting Communism with "unalterable force" wherever it broke out of its geographical perimeter. In Korea, a jungle-less peninsula, the strategy worked. (In Vietnam, it would not). The costs were high—more than 33,000 Americans killed on snowy, sterile ridges, or tortured to death by their captors. There was folly, none greater than Secretary of State Dean Acheson's prewar speech that left South Korea outside our "defense perimeter," thus inviting Communist attack. There was also the brilliance of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's landing at Inchon. The war was a victory for South Korea, now an economic great power whose freedom gives the lie to apologists for prosperous despotisms. For North Korea, it left 50 wasted years under a mad dictatorship. We honor the bravery, and regret the losses.

To Run with W.

VEEP-WISE, George W. Bush says he has two requirements. The first could be called the "30-feet test": He wants a compatible colleague down the hall for the next four years. Second, he's looking for someone ready to assume the presidency.

A key question is whether Bush wants to choose an heir, who would expect to run for the top job in 2008 (if all goes according to rosiest plan). The GOP's rank and file will respond more warily to a young, ambitious candidate than to someone capping his political career with the number-two spot.

The most important political consideration in veep-selection, everyone agrees, is to do no harm. It would be nice if the candidate could deliver a critical state, but that hasn't happened since 1960. Some in Austin think a Catholic pick could be Bush's saving grace.

Finally, of course, the prospective veep must be willing. Bush has shown no interest in persuading anyone who has already declined the honor—unless his name is Colin Powell. Bush apparently would be willing to meet almost any condition to get Powell on the ticket: One Austin insider has even argued that the general wouldn't have to campaign in the fall.

What follows is our own rundown of the most mentioned candidates, along with their pluses and minuses. Keep in mind, however, that Bush may surprise us all. A dark-horse gray eminence like Indiana senator Dick Lugar? The GOP's "other woman" (i.e., not Elizabeth Dole), Rep. Jennifer Dunn of Washington? Almost anything is possible.

Rep. Chris Cox of California

+ Young (47), telegenic, and quick on his feet. A pro-life Catholic with a policy portfolio that excites conservatives. Could help GOP congressional candidates in California and force Gore to spend time and money there.

– Unlikely actually to deliver California, and not well known outside conservative policy circles. Bumper stickers would have to read "George-Chris!"

Liddy Dole of The Watergate

+ N/A

– Bob Dole without the Viagra—dull campaigner, ideologically nondescript. Ticket would lack a certain freshness: Bush-Dole? How about Bush-Ford? Or Bush-Hoover? Flunks both 30-feet and ready-for-presidency tests.

Sen. Pete Domenici of New Mexico

+ The quintessential establishment Republican, so it figures that he's Trent Lott's candidate for veep. Domenici is a pro-life Italian Catholic. Smart and aggressive. Picking Domenici would also save taxpayers billions by making him give up the gavel at the Senate Budget Committee.

– At 68, he could make Bush seem like George and Barbara's "boy." And does Bush want to associate himself with Congress and the budget wars (and surrenders)?

Gov. John Engler of Michigan

+ The reformist governor of a battleground state—and a perennial conservative favorite, despite his recent opposition to a school-choice referendum.

– Support for Bush didn't translate into a win in the Michigan primary. Also, his controversial deferment during Vietnam would certainly weigh in Bush's considerations.

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ABORTION

Ruling Without Mercy

EIGHT years ago, in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, the Supreme Court disappointed pro-lifers by reaffirming abortion as a constitutional right. The Court urged them to "struggle to accept" the decision. They would be "tested by following" *Casey*, the Court said, but "the Court implicitly undertakes to remain steadfast." Now, in *Stenberg* v. *Carhart*, it has put even partial-birth abortion beyond the reach of the law. It has remained steadfast even unto infanticide. The Court is testing us again. It is a test we dare not pass.

The Court's putative justification for striking down Nebraska's ban on partial-birth abortion is that the law is too vague, and might restrict so many abortions as to place an "undue burden" on the alleged constitutional right to abortion. But that is not the Court's real concern. If it were, it would have waited to see whether the law really was being applied indiscriminately. The law, however, was never given a chance to work. It was immediately blocked by a federal judge.

Various justices—Stephen Breyer writing for the Court, and Sandra Day O'Connor in her concurrence—also raise the concern that the law made no exception for health. Yet an expert panel of the American Medical Association found that partial-birth abortion is never medically necessary. And the Court implicitly concedes that the mother's health would not be damaged if the child were simply delivered. As Justice Antonin Scalia noted in dissent, "the Court must know . . . that demanding a 'health exception' which requires the abortionist to assure himself that, in his expert medical judgment, this method is, in the case at hand, marginally safer than others (how can one prove the contrary beyond a reasonable doubt?) is to give live-birth abortion free rein."

The Court's real fear is that accepting any restriction on abortion will call all of its handiwork into question. It is putting its finger in the dike. The Court advances an argument similar to that of Judge Richard Posner, whose own opinion holding a partial-birth-abortion ban unconstitutional is cited by two of the justices. Posner points out that

Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska

+ Popular with the media. A McCainiac who is also a Vietnam combat vet. A recognized spokesman on foreign policy, and a pro-lifer.

– Popular with the media—sometimes at the expense of fellow Republicans. Senate colleagues regard him as McCain Lite (not a compliment). Nebraska is in the bag.

Rep. John Kasich of Ohio

+ From battleground state, Ohio, with Pennsylvania roots. Young (48) and energetic, an effective performer both on television and the stump. Few Republicans arouse as much enthusiasm, especially from Reagan Democrats. Good chemistry with Bush, a fellow jogger and father of twin daughters.

– Invites Dennis the Menace comparisons, when Bush needs more gravitas.

Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma

+ A pro-life Catholic, who actually speaks out against divorce and illegitimacy. He supported impeachment while other Republican governors looked at their shoes. A solid, reassuring figure: a former FBI agent, who performed gracefully after the Oklahoma City bombing. Staunchly loyal to Bush.

– A Texas-Oklahoma ticket? An obstreperous Democratic legislature has blocked much of his agenda. State GOPers worry about a shoot-from-the-hip problem.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona

+ The media would swoon—at least initially. Probably would help Bush on the West Coast and in the Northeast. Pledged to "beat Gore like a drum." Would accentuate the campaign's association with patriotism and reform—and make Bush look large-minded.

– Bush would have to give White House press conferences behind bulletproof glass. ("Has Jonathan Alter been thoroughly frisked?") Flunks Bush's 30-feet test. Nothing personal—McCain doesn't seem to like most Republicans.

Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania

+ Pennsylvania's 23 electoral votes are worth having. A Vietnam vet, and a Catholic. He's got state and national experience. Very likable.

– A liberal record on defense issues in the House. Pro-choice. The media would be off and running with stories on the schism in the GOP—not least because his selection could actually provoke one.

Sen. Fred Thompson of Tennessee

+ Hollywood glamour, media favorite. Former prosecutor and McCainiac who would put Gore in the line of fire on fundraising abuses. Gore could no longer afford to be absentee landlord.

– Pro-choice. And pro-blonde—a bachelor with a very active social life.

Sen. George Voinovich of Ohio

+ Former governor, popular in Ohio. A pro-life Catholic (are you noticing a trend here?) who has been a leader on school choice.

– Not earth-toned, just beige. His fights against tax cuts and gun rights have angered some Republicans. "He's the only guy Bush could pick where the pro-lifers would stay in the hall, and everyone else would leave," says one Republican strategist.

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the technique used to perform an abortion has no moral importance, as the baby will have been deliberately killed whichever one it is. What difference does it make what percentage of the baby's body is outside the womb?

Posner is right: It makes no difference. But this is not a legitimate reason to strike down a ban on partial-birth abortion. The Constitution does not require that all laws conform to a rigorous moral logic. A few years ago, there was widespread outrage about Florida's electric chair, "Old Sparky," which sometimes set criminals on fire during its operation. Nobody suggested that this ghoulish spectacle did not matter because the criminal was going to die anyway. The prevention of cruelty and horror was sufficient justification for fixing the problem.

Posner's argument poses a dilemma, but not for opponents of abortion. They have always maintained that a human life begins at conception, and that it deserves the protection of the state. The purpose of the campaign against partial-birth abortion was to challenge proponents of abortion to draw the line at birth. If they will not, it is reasonable to wonder whether they will draw a line anywhere. Occasionally, an abortionist will fail in his effort to kill a baby. On Posner's premises, it is hard to see how the law can protect such survivors. Pro-lifers plan to press the point.

The campaign against partial-birth abortion has revealed that the public's moral sentiments, if not always its moral reasoning, remain healthy. It has revealed something, too, about the abortion lobby—the activists, the politicians, the writers, the judges who support abortion on demand. They have watched a baby, partly out of the womb, have her skull punctured and her brains sucked out. They have been asked, Must even this be tolerated? And they have looked at this grisly scene and answered yes, even this. The logic of abortion is merciless.

CAMPAIGN 2000

Gas Lines

THE rise in the price of gas—it's around $2.30 a gallon in much of the Midwest—would seem to be an issue tailor-made for Republicans. Environmentalists, very much including Al Gore, have long favored higher prices for energy; the Clinton administration raised the gas tax in 1993, and tried to raise energy taxes even more; an administration regulation on fuel has been blamed for 25 cents of the price increase.

Gore, recognizing the danger, has been at his demagogic worst in responding to the price spike, which he blames on "gouging" by the oil companies. His aides have suggested that Bush, a former oilman, would protect the industry. Now, Gore is far too intelligent to believe any of this. Surely he knows that companies usually set prices so as to maximize profits; if a price changes, it is because shifting market conditions have changed the price at which this happens. And the rise in oil-company profits that the Gore campaign eyes suspiciously preceded the run-up in prices. Add the fact that Gore is also proposing $75 billion in subsidies for alternative fuels, and it looks as though Gore is running to succeed not Bill Clinton but Jimmy Carter.

Yet Republicans have had difficulty taking advantage of the issue. Some in Congress have suggested repealing Clinton's tax increase on gas. This is a worthy idea, but one that would lower gas prices by only 4.3 cents. George W. Bush has tried to wrap all the possible criticisms of the administration into the complaint that it lacks a "national energy policy"—a critique that does not sound very conservative and lacks political bite.

The larger problem is that the Republicans' argument for lower gas prices has lacked a principled basis. In a free market, individual prices will sometimes go up; annoyance at this fact of life is not a reasonable basis for public policy. The government's goal should not be that prices go down, but that they be set freely. And that means, above all, that the OPEC cartel must be broken. America fought a war ten years ago to prevent one tyrannical regime from controlling 40 percent of the world's oil supply. It is time to reassert the principle of free trade in vital commodities. This administration, perversely, has been more set on breaking up Microsoft than on breaking up OPEC.

As for Gore, his vulnerability is what he would do to gas prices in the future. Republicans can legitimately suggest that today's prices are just a foretaste of what they could expect from a man ideologically hostile to cars and roads. The Kyoto global-warming accord he favors would require massive tax increases on energy. Gore's campaign against sprawl is also a campaign against cars, and for congestion. Liberals believe, as not a few of them have written in recent weeks, that the American people are decadent in their love of cars and "spoiled" by low gas prices. Gore, whose policies reflect the same assumptions, should be forced to defend them.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Lifeless Debate

THE circus surrounding the execution of Gary Graham shows why there can be no serious discussion of capital punishment at least until the day after the election. If Graham does not become George W. Bush's Willie Horton, it won't be for lack of liberal trying.

Graham was executed in Huntsville, and his death became a de facto Gore campaign event. Graham declaimed from the gurney that he was "fighting for what I believed in" (a life of crime?). Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, and Bianca Jagger attended as witnesses. Jackson, an ordained minister, compared George W. Bush to Pontius Pilate, which means Graham was Jesus Christ. This celebrity ragtag and bobtail made no enduring protest when Arkansas governor Bill Clinton left the campaign trail in 1992 to supervise the execution of a brain-damaged man. As long as Jesse Jackson gets a prime-time convention speech, a campaign plane, and

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(lightly audited) money for his get-out-the-vote drives, he will back any liberal Democrat. Jackson and his pet pug, Sharpton, will stump for Gore, though Gore also supports capital punishment.

The link between Bush and the death penalty, though opportunistic, is not fanciful. Texas has put 134 prisoners to death since Bush took office in 1995, and he has said that he is convinced that all were justly executed. In a darker vein, he mocked the pleas for pardon of Karla Faye Tucker, a convicted murderess, in an interview with *Talk* magazine. If Bush had shown some awareness of the possible pitfalls of capital punishment, or even maintained ordinary silence about Tucker, he would get zero credit from the Jackson brigade. But thoughtful supporters would support him with more confidence.

There was only one eyewitness against Gary Graham for the crime for which he was executed (he had committed others). Eyewitness testimony can be notoriously unreliable. Yet juries are asked to judge eyewitnesses' credibility. It is a fantasy to require DNA evidence in every capital case, not least because the default strategy of defense lawyers is to withhold as much evidence from juries as possible.

So the death penalty will, and will not, be a live issue for the next four months. As grist for harangues and attack ads, it will be huge. As a subject of serious discussion, it will be nowhere.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I have noticed the frequent use of the word "reticent" as a synonym for "reluctant." This usage is now common among the chattering classes.

The American Heritage Dictionary offers "reluctant" as the third meaning for "reticent." The first meaning (the one I have always favored) is "inclined to keep one's thoughts and feelings to oneself." How did it come to pass that so many people are using "reticent" when they mean "reluctant"?

Laurie MacDonald
North Attleboro, Mass.

Dear Mrs. MacDonald: How did it come to pass? How did *any* error in usage come to pass? It is because of such errors that we have usage guides, and sharp eyes like your own.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Your encapsulated history lesson, "The Germans were not in the mood to take up arms against the new government," does not explain the lack of firearms recovered from the Warsaw Ghetto.

On display at the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., is a surfeit of everyday items such as kitchen utensils, combs, etc. Only one, single, dilapidated handgun is exhibited, a testament to what I believe is the true meaning of gun registration.

Sincerely,
David Perlman
Henderson, Nev.

Dear Mr. Perlman: You are certainly correct in the point you make, and it is an eloquent one.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Living in the hills of West Virginia, I own a couple of guns for my self-preservation.

Some night, when a couple of six-foot, 250-lb. bozos decide to rip my door off the hinges and do me in and steal everything I own, I will be prepared.

The guns are locked in a safe when the grandchildren visit. Before I purchased the guns, I took an NRA course in "The Basics of Pistol Shooting."

I fear the following:

1. All guns registered—done.
2. Locks on all guns—done.
3. Policemen at my door to check on my guns.

Your thoughts?

Joseph R. Forth
Wheeling, W.V.

Dear Mr. Forth: I quite understand your point, and I have a veritable armory where I live.

On the other hand, that doesn't cope with the problem: Suppose those bozos arrive when the grandchildren are there? You need other precautions, and there are those who say that these involve a diminution in the gun supply. One point of view, not necessarily conclusive.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: It has occurred to me that you might find comfort and joy in contemplating something that my German teacher once told our class.

He said that there are some English verbs that mean two things. That is, they imply two separate actions or states of being, or one of each. He gave two examples: One was "fetch," which he said means to go and get it *and* to bring it back. The other was "opine," which he said means to have an opinion *and* to express it. I have never heard or read about this anywhere else, and I wonder if you know other verbs with this property.

Sincerely,
J. Walter Lynch
Athens, Ga.

Dear Mr. Lynch: I probably do, but I can't think of them.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I must confess, with some shame, that despite reading the word "postmodern" countless times, I do not really know what it means. I would greatly appreciate seeing a definition provided by the editors or readers.

Very truly,
James L. Blilie
Lino Lakes, Minn.

Dear Mr. Blilie: The word is generally used to denote post-Western thought. We should devote more time to it.

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Gore's Investor Bid

Bush should top him

RICHARD NADLER

By Roman Genn

THE hour of the new investor class has come. We have the strongest evidence possible: The Democratic presidential nominee has been forced to support pro-investor policies. We should be pleased at the pace of progress—but also a little worried, because Al Gore's conversion has occurred before the Republicans, the natural allies of the new investor, have fully awoken to their political opportunities.

When George W. Bush announced his proposal on Social Security, Gore's attack—to the surprise of many—backfired. Too many people had experience managing their own investments to be frightened of "stock-market roulette." Polls showed that the two parties, for the first time ever, were judged even on the question of who would best protect Social Security.

So the vice president put in his own bid for investor allegiance, coming out for a program dubbed Retirement Savings Plus. His plan would give workers individual accounts just like a 401(k)—with the difference that their contributions would be matched by the federal government instead of employers. Account-holders could withdraw money for retirement, emergency medical expenses, first-time homeownership, and college.

These accounts would be "progressive." When fully implemented, workers earning under $30,000 could contribute as much as $500 per year, matched 3-to-1 by a refundable tax credit. Middle-income workers would receive a 1-to-1 match. Workers earning between $60,000 and $100,000 would receive a dollar tax credit for every three dollars saved. In all cases, the accounts would be capped at $2,000 a year. (By Democratic logic, those most heavily taxed already—earners in the $100,000-plus bracket—would be ineligible for tax relief.)

The first casualty of Gore's proposal was his own argument against Bush's Social Security plan. The Gore campaign explained that couples could easily use Gore's program to build up a $400,000 nest egg. That would yield a life annuity of about $50,000 on retirement. For a couple making $50,000 a year, that's a return 50 percent better than Social Security, at much less expense than payroll taxes. In effect, each dollar this couple invested in Gore's account would generate twice the benefits of a dollar put into Social Security.

So Gore's numbers belie his defense of the Social Security status quo—a point conservatives were quick to make when Gore unveiled his plan. But conservatives have been slower to appreciate the virtues of the Gore plan.

They have not yet recognized that this scheme builds on ideas they themselves have advocated for years. Republicans have long countered liberal spending programs with personal-investment options: educational savings accounts, IRAs, and the like. In each case, a tax cut or tax credit generates personally owned, privately managed financial assets. The drawback to these options is that they are targeted, with account-holders able to use their assets for limited purposes or times.

The solution to this problem is a universal IRA. If workers could save for retirement, health care, education, homeownership, unemployment protection, and business start-ups in the same account, the targeted tax cuts would become more and more like general tax cuts. At any given time, most families would be engaging in at least one of these purposes.

NR's Ramesh Ponnuru and I have advocated an incrementalist strategy toward achieving universal IRAs. Targeted accounts were the thin end of the wedge. Over time, programs such as educational savings accounts would grow just the way spending programs do—but to opposite effect. Instead of higher taxes and more government control, they would produce a demand for higher tax cuts and more individual control. Politicians' efforts to broaden the constituency for such programs would lead in time to universal savings accounts.

Now Gore, driven by the new investor class, has compressed this development from a decade to a day. His new plan is, for all its flaws, very much like a universal IRA. Funded by tax cuts, the program is deregulatory in character. The privately owned, personally managed accounts would generate retirement benefits without union mediation, medical resources without insurance, college tuition without federal loans.

This approach was not Al Gore's first choice. For a Democrat, it is a terrifying choice. By allocating $200 billion from the federal budget surplus to investment tax cuts, scored largely against income-tax liabilities, Gore insults every liberal-

Mr. Nadler is chairman of the Republican Ideas Political Committee in Overland Park, Kan.

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NewsMax.com Breaks Liberal Media Monopoly

The Internet revolution will re-define America

BY ROBERT R. REGNAN

Control of the media by the liberal elites is almost history.

For more than five decades the left has controlled the major media outlets. Out was the "old journalism" based on facts and objectivity. In was the blatant propaganda masquerading as news.

Consider that in 1992 the Roper study found that 89% of the Washington press corps voted for Bill Clinton. Let that sink in. Almost 90% of the media elites in Washington wanted the Democratic candidate for president. Consider also the danger posed by such a fact.

We know that the founding fathers enshrined freedom of the press in the First Amendment. It is among our "first" freedoms because without it democratic societies will die. But the idea of a free press presupposes a diverse press.

Despite a plethora of media – broadcast TV, cable, print and radio – the liberal establishment had kept a lockgrip on news and information. Consider when one watches the major network news programs on ABC, NBC and CBS. They lead with the same stories, use the same talking heads, and have the same slant.

Major news organizations all seem to be on the same page. Look at coverage of the Elian Gonzalez controversy. Can anyone deny the coverage has been almost totally slanted against the boy's Miami relatives and the Cuban-American community?

One might have believed that the profusion of media outlets would have led to a media revolution. It didn't. In fact, the power of the media establishment has multiplied because biased news reports can now be bounced many times through the liberal media echo chamber of TV, radio, print and cable.

The Internet was hailed as a break through, but once again, major media outlets are scrambling to dominate the news market in this new arena. But their efforts may be in vain.

NewsMax.com Breaks the LockGrip

The Internet is already breaking the media establishment's control over the information flow.

One web site at the vanguard of this movement is NewsMax.com.

Founded in September of 1998, this news portal has become a major source of news for thinking individuals who want an alternative perspective. It's already been rated the #1 news web site by Deja.com.

Talkers magazine says NewsMax.com is "incredibly impressive" and now "the staple" for radio and TV hosts and producers across the country for news and story ideas. The *Wall Street Journal Business Report* recently featured NewsMax.com as one of the country's top alternative news sites, reporting it was revolutionizing "the information flow like Gutenberg's press." Prudential Securities Washington newsletter describes NewsMax.com as "a must read" and "one of the world's truly great news sites."

Noted journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave says NewsMax.com is a "news site for opinion-makers — a source for new news." Former *Times of London* Editor Lord William Rees-Mogg serves on NewsMax.com's advisory board. He says "it's one of the few outlets for news I trust in the U.S."

Edited by award-winning journalist Christopher Ruddy, NewsMax.com offers an array of writers with hard-hitting commentary, including former U.S. Congressman John LeBoutillier, Carl Limbacher, David Limbaugh, radio hosts Barry Farber, Neal Boortz and Michael Savage. Because NewsMax.com believes in diversity, it even offers columns from the likes of Hillary Clinton, Molly Ivins and others.

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activist group in his party. The surplus is money available to liberal constituencies at no political cost. Yet the Democratic presidential nominee proposes to spend this money not for 100,000 new members of the teachers' union, but on individual tax credits. He thereby informs his party's teachers, trade unionists, social workers, trial attorneys, and feminists that his best marginal use of "new" money, and lots of it, is to remove it from their hands.

■

Gore is on dangerous terrain, just as Republicans are when they endorse social programs.

■

So Gore is on dangerous terrain, just as Republicans are when they endorse social programs. He can gain new supporters, but he risks alienating core constituencies. He has no choice but to take that risk, however, because his base cannot elect him. The polls have forced him to trawl for votes among the swelling investor class.

But this class trends Republican. The GOP is the home of capital-friendly policies. And that is why George W. Bush should match Gore's bid for the new investors—and then raise him. Bush alienates no major Republican constituency by cutting taxes on shareholders. And the fact that he already proposed Social Security reform puts him in a position to outflank the Democrats among investors small and large with a universal savings account program of comparable size.

Bush ought to make his accounts within that program larger than Gore's. He can do this craftily by inviting state governments to participate in a savings program. Combining a federal tax credit with a state tax credit would make the program larger at less federal expense. And it would encourage state politicians to cut taxes rather than spend money. (Bush has already incorporated such features in his Individual Development Accounts, a matched savings plan for the poorest workers.)

Bush can also make his accounts more attractive than Gore's by expanding their purposes: Account-holders should be free to make withdrawals for grade-school and high-school expenses (including private school tuitions).

And Bush can remove, or moderate, the liberal elements of Gore's plan. Gore's tax credits would be available to people who do not pay any taxes as well as to those who do. That's a new transfer payment. Better to let poorer workers use the existing earned income tax credit as their savings. Moreover, Bush can reduce the progressivity of Gore's plan, making the credit flatter, or even truly flat.

But instead of offering their own proposals, Republicans, foolishly, have been content simply to denounce Gore's, or to whine that he has played copycat. Some have labeled the Gore plan a "new entitlement," when it is in fact a tax cut. They have accepted Gore's framing of his proposal as a substitute for Bush's, when there is no reason both could not be implemented. In fact, they would be complementary. There are 80 million owners of capital stock already. An additional 80 million under a Gore-style plan would make Social Security reform that much easier. The first 80 million, after all, changed reform from the "third rail" of American politics to George W. Bush's best issue.

Republicans complain that Gore would not reduce Social Security's liabilities. But a concern about the system's liabilities is not what made Bush's plan so popular in the first place. The experience of Americans with the rewards of private investment did that. And for the same reason, Gore's accounts are likely to be popular. Of the 80 million with investment experience, 55 million own portfolios built on matched savings. Where such plans are available, participation rates exceed 85 percent. Workers know these programs, and love them. They will enthusiastically embrace another, whoever its author.

Republicans believe that savings and investment should not be double-taxed, and that deregulation and choice improve the quality of markets in education and health care. To win the allegiance of investors, Republicans need merely be themselves, deploying with passion the policies and programs that they initiated. And then it will be, not just the investors' hour, but theirs as well. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 II** ■

Smog and Mirrors

Gore's dishonest campaign against Texas

JOHN J. MILLER

VICE PRESIDENT GORE wastes no time before messing with Texas—and thereby with Gov. George W. Bush—in the foreword to the new edition of his book, *Earth in the Balance*. "Air quality is generally better across the nation, although a number of cities still have a long way to go," says Gore. "When I wrote this book, Los Angeles, for example, had the worst ozone pollution in the country. But Los Angeles has achieved some significant improvements . . . while Houston has taken over as the city with the worst air pollution in America."

Not quite. "We don't rank cities," says Dave Ryan, a spokesman for the Environmental Protection Agency. But the *Houston Chronicle* did, using EPA data. Last fall, to great fanfare, it told readers that their city was the smoggiest in the country. But it shouldn't have. "Anyone who claims that Houston's smog problems are equal to or worse than L.A.'s is misinformed," says Kay Jones, a former EPA official who now consults on air quality. The thing is, Houston had an unusually hot summer and Los Angeles an unusually cool one—which created a one-year anomaly in smog readings, almost certain to be reversed this fall if the *Chronicle* makes a new assessment using the same criteria. Yet even these criteria weren't well chosen. Alternative interpretations of the same EPA data from last year show no change at all between Houston and L.A.; the air in both cities is smoggy, but L.A. remains king.

Still, the vice president's surrogates now mention Houston's unfriendly skies at every opportunity. When the League of Conservation Voters formally endorsed Gore in May, president Deb

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President of the Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute

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...E HIGH ...OOL LEADERSHIP ...FERENCE

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Callahan labeled Houston "the smog capital of the nation." The Sierra Club has run ads blaming it all on Bush. Count on someone bringing up Houston during prime time at the Democratic convention in—where else?—Los Angeles.

It's all part of a broader attack on the whole state of Texas, one meant to mimic Vice President Bush's successful assault on Massachusetts twelve years ago, which transformed Michael Dukakis's highly touted "Massachusetts Miracle" into the "Massachusetts Mirage" in just a few months. Houston is meant to serve as this year's polluted Boston Harbor. If Team Gore has its way, most Americans will begin to regard the Lone Star State as a national embarrassment having more in common with a Third World country than with the rest of America. "If you listen to [Gore] long enough," says Texas lieutenant governor Rick Perry, "you might think we're living in one of the vice president's rental properties."

Texas isn't just filthy, the story goes; it's also a lawless place that lets people carry guns into churches. Stealing a page from the Clinton playbook of microinitiatives, Gore has suggested that no decent state would permit such a thing, and that the federal government must now intervene. The comic strip *Doonesbury* represents Bush himself as a disembodied cowboy hat—a caricature that would fall flat if he were a governor from just about anywhere else. The recent controversy over the state's use of the death penalty also reinforces an outlaw image, although this issue is more media-driven than Gore-driven.

On top of it all, said Gore spokesman Douglas Hattaway in March, Texas is "one of the worst places to raise a child." In the kid-centered politics of today, those are fighting words. A Gore ad earlier this year added a bit of detail to the claim: "Texas ranked the 48th worst state in America to raise a child." The source for this is a report by the Children's Rights Council, a nonpartisan child-advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C., that ranks states based on their rates of divorce, child immunization, teenage births, and other factors. The strange thing about that study is how much Texas dropped in a single year—from 33rd to 48th. The council doesn't appear to have an anti-Bush agenda, but it did alter its scoring criteria between 1998 and 1999. "Tennessee doesn't do much better than Texas," notes the council's president, David L. Levy. "Gore has nothing to brag about." In fact, in all of the council's previous annual rankings, Texas appeared rather typical compared to other states, and Tennessee finished behind Texas by an average of ten places. "You should look at the Annie E. Casey Foundation's rankings," suggests Levy. "They're much more professional than ours." These were released on June 20. The result: Texas is 37th, Tennessee 45th.

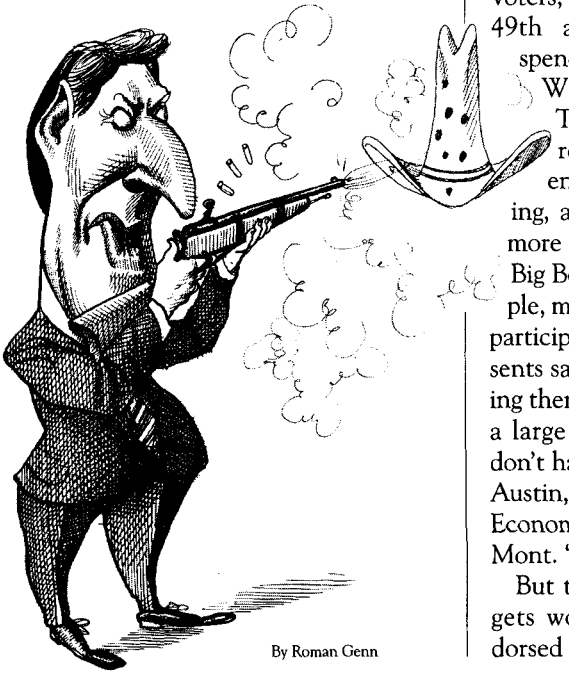
■

Sloppy research, whether deliberate or not, is a hallmark of Team Gore's war on Texas.

■

It's on the environmental issue, however, that the Gore campaign hopes to inflict the most damage on Bush. And so, Texas is "the number-one most polluted state in America—air, water, and land," said the vice president in April.

That's—at best—debatable. Yes, Texas has a lot of pollution. What does Gore expect from the country's second-most-populous state? Texas is also home to 60 percent of America's petrochemical industry, and 25 percent of its oil refineries. This production has to occur somewhere, which means that Texas pollutes on behalf of the rest of the country. What's more, Texas has cut its pollution by more than any other state over the last decade, according to a recent report by Steve Hayward for the Texas Public Policy Foundation. And even when the measure is adjusted to take into account the size of the state, only two states reduced pollution more than Texas.



By Roman Genn

Sloppy research, whether deliberate or not, is a hallmark of this war on Texas. The League of Conservation Voters has asserted that "more than 4,400 miles of Texas rivers—one-third of those monitored—are so polluted they fail to meet federal standards for recreational and other uses." But the group's own cited sources don't support this. The claim comes from a *Dallas Morning News* op-ed by Timothy O'Leary, and here's what it says: "A third of the state's rivers and streams probably violate federal water quality standards, though no one is certain because the state declines to test them all." Perhaps this is damning; but it's also a qualified statement based on guesswork. Gore campaign rhetoric, of course, doesn't allow for shades of gray. It is perhaps because gray isn't an earth tone.

Texas has the third-largest state-park system in the country (behind Alaska and California), but this also isn't good enough for the League of Conservation Voters, which claims that "Texas ranks 49th among states in government spending to support its state parks." What the group doesn't say is that Texas park managers are given the responsibility of generating revenues in lieu of direct state funding, and many parks actually take in more than they spend. Visitors to the Big Bend Ranch State Park, for example, may pay several hundred dollars to participate in a cattle drive. That represents savings for Texas taxpayers, allowing them to spend less and still maintain a large park system. "The state parks don't have to go running hat in hand to Austin," says Don Leal of the Political Economy Research Center in Bozeman, Mont. "The goal is self-sufficiency."

But the distortion about Texas parks gets worse. When Deb Callahan endorsed Gore, for instance, she said that

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"under the Bush administration, not one single acre of land has been added to the state park system." Not true. Texas has added nearly 91,000 acres, all through donations. When the *Houston Chronicle* confronted the League's Betsy Loyless with this uncomfortable reality, she explained that this expansion shouldn't count because it's not a direct state expenditure. "It does say something about how the state of Texas reacts, rather than advances public land acquisition," she snipped.

It says something, all right—in fact, it speaks volumes. But it reveals nothing about Texas, or Bush. **NR**

■ THE MEDIA ■

Time's Terrible Two

The perils of Barlett and Steele

RAMESH PONNURU

Is there a journalism award that Donald Barlett and James Steele have not received? A pair of investigative reporters now at *Time* magazine, Barlett and Steele won two Pulitzers while at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. A series they wrote in *Time* last year received eight different prizes. In 1990, the *Washington Journalism Review* called them "almost certainly the best team in the history of investigative reporting—Woodward and Bernstein included."

The crowning moment of their careers came in 1991, when they wrote a massive series (nine parts, 73,000 words) for the *Inquirer*. "America: What Went Wrong?" was a diagnosis of what ailed the nation's economy, then in the middle of a recession. The paper got 400,000 requests for reprints before it quit taking orders. The series became a best-selling book, which Bill Clinton used to support his indictment of President Bush's economic policies. The book popped up again in President Clinton's last State of the Union speech, when he mentioned its title to show how much the national mood had improved since he took office.

The book is hopelessly dated. To read *America: What Went Wrong?* today is to travel back to a time when Democrats seriously argued that the United States faced long-term decline unless it reined in Wall Street, got tough with Japan, and adopted an industrial policy. Not even Dick Gephardt believes that anymore. But Barlett and Steele still do. To judge by their recent work, they are determined to be spokesmen for what remains of the labor Left—even if they have to do sloppy reporting to retain the role.

Nobody has ever accused Barlett and Steele of a strong grasp of economics. They have always preferred to tell economic history as a morality play, with venal politicians and greedy, short-sighted CEOs ganging up on working stiffs. The 1991 series recycled every Democratic cliché about Reaganomics. According to Barlett and Steele—let's call them B&S for short—the country was de-industrializing. The only new jobs were in hamburger-flipping. Corporate debt was rising, thanks to junk bonds. So was the trade deficit. Companies were dismantling their pension guarantees. Deregulation had been a disaster for everyone but the rich. The middle class was vanishing. The solution was for the government to raise taxes on business and the rich, prohibit "corporate raids," cap executive salaries, and direct investment toward strategic industries.

If all this was untenable then, it seems downright quaint today. Almost everybody now sees that the debt-financed restructuring of corporate America in the '80s left it much more able to succeed in the '90s. "Junk bonds," no longer demonized, are simply called "high-yield bonds." Deregulation clearly cut the cost of transportation; only by ignoring inflation were B&S able to obscure this fact. The rise of services created not only dislocations, but opportunities. People prefer their 401(k)s to yesterday's pensions for the simple reason that the newer accounts have higher yields. And by participating in capital markets, these accounts direct resources to promising industries far more efficiently than government could.

None of this experience registered with B&S. In 1996, they wrote another bloated series for the *Inquirer*, "America: Who Stole the Dream?" The message was substantially the same as before, although with more time spent bashing trade and immigration for lowering wages. Service industries still didn't produce "good jobs." As in the previous series, an endless stream of hard-luck cases was made to represent the overall trend of the economy.

But by 1996, there was neither a recession nor a Republican White House, and journalists were treating left-populist economics more skeptically than in 1991. *Newsweek* columnist Robert Samuelson called the B&S series "junk journalism" that "fails the basic test of journalistic integrity and competence." The *Seattle Times*, which had planned to reprint the series, pulled the plug after the first installment because its assertions were "unsubstantiated."

Leftists who believe that the middle class is being immiserated need to explain why that class has not revolted against its oppression. Now that "false consciousness" has been discredited, a corrupt campaign-finance system has become the favored explanation—one that B&S have adopted at *Time*, with a vengeance. "In essence," they wrote in February, "campaign spending in America has divided all of us into two groups: first- and second-class citizens. . . . Call it government for the few at the expense of the many." They thus inaugurated a new series explaining, as *Time*'s headline writer put it, "How the Little Guy Gets Crunched" by campaign contributions.

The very latest big B&S article was a mid-May exposé—or rather, attempted exposé—of the bankruptcy bill before Congress. The bill is a response to the explosion of bankruptcy filings over the last 15 years: There were 300,000 in 1984, 1.4 million in 1998. But to hear B&S tell it, Congress is simply "punishing the downtrodden" at the behest of credit-card companies.

They lead, of course, with a sob story: "Eight-year-old Annelise, the oldest of the three Trapp children, is a bright, spunky, dark-haired wisp who suffers from a degenerative muscular condition. She lives in a wheelchair or bed, is

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tied to a respirator at least eight hours a day, eats mostly through a tube . . ." The Trapps have credit-card debts and outstanding medical bills. The bankruptcy-reform bill, according to B&S, would make it harder, maybe even impossible, for the Trapps to file for bankruptcy.

But B&S never show that the Trapps, or any of the other struggling families they interviewed, would be affected by the bill. That's because the bill tightens the rules for filing bankruptcy *only for families making above the median income*. And contrary to the article's repeated claim, the bill eliminates the option of filing bankruptcy for . . . no one.

■

Given their mishandling of the facts, Barlett and Steele are placing their magazine in a parallel universe.

■

Again and again, B&S get the details of the bill wrong. They write, "If a mother tapped an ATM to buy necessities such as food or prescription drugs six weeks before filing for bankruptcy, the withdrawal could be considered a fraudulent transaction." Not true. The bill clamps down on people who, planning to file for bankruptcy, buy luxury goods they intend never to pay for. Groceries and medications wouldn't count as luxuries.

Or take this claim: "The proposed legislation would treat a bankrupt man's credit-card debt the same as his obligation to pay child support, meaning that MasterCard and an unmarried mother would compete for the same limited pool of cash." Actually, the bill makes it harder for fathers to avoid paying child support—by making it the top priority, ahead not only of MasterCard but of lawyer's fees (which are currently ranked above it). That's why the National Child Support Enforcement Association has endorsed the bill, along with many child-support collection agencies. Have they, too, been seduced by the credit-card companies?

For B&S, the fault for the rise in bankruptcies lies with the credit-card companies themselves, for extending credit to people who can't manage it well. (Journalists, presumably, are in a much better position to rate credit risks than people who merely do it for a living.) Other financial services, such as the "payday advance companies" that let people borrow against their next paychecks to meet a short-term need, also come in for criticism. Why B&S think that poor people are better off without access to credit is mysterious. Would little Annelise be better off if the Trapps had not been able to borrow the money to take care of her in the first place?

B&S can't even sustain their central argument for the length of their "exposé." They conclude by quoting a Harvard law professor to the effect that a bill this bad can only be a payoff to the credit-card companies. But earlier, B&S themselves have conceded that "most members of Congress believe in what they are doing." This is not a minor concession; it is a glaring contradiction.

Unable to follow an argument, B&S don't follow the money very well either. The American Bankruptcy Institute, no friend of this legislation, did a study pointing out that campaign contributions from the credit-card industry haven't been going to members of the House Judiciary Committee, which is responsible for the bankruptcy bill. They've been going to members of the Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over matters that interest the industry more. Of the ten top recipients of industry money in the House, only one is on the Judiciary Committee—Florida Republican Bill McCollum, who's also on the Banking Committee. And the Democrat who has received the most contributions, John LaFalce of New York, voted against the bill.

The bill passed the House 313–108 and the Senate 83–14, with strong bipartisan support. Indeed, Bob Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, sent his colleagues a letter trashing B&S's *Time* article. In their vituperation of the bill, the two are positioning *Time* to the left even of liberals such as Charles Rangel, who voted for the bill. Given their mishandling of the facts, they are also placing their magazine in a parallel universe. Is this really where *Time* wants to be? **NR**

■ THE MEDIA II ■

Don't Be Like Mike

What Kinsley & Co. fail to grasp

STEPHEN MOORE

OVER the past two decades, much has changed in the world of economic thought. But one phenomenon remains safely predictable: Ask a lefty about capital-gains taxes, and you are virtually certain to get a wrong answer.

Michael Kinsley is one of the worst offenders. Formerly editor of *The New Republic* and now editor of *Slate*, Kinsley has been writing tirades against capital-gains tax cuts for as long as anyone cares to remember. His columns are characterized by 1) great fervor and 2) imperviousness to evidence. He charges, for example, that this "tax break" enriches only America's yacht owners; that a rate cut would cost the Treasury $75 billion; that the supply-side economic-efficiency argument for capital-gains reduction is blather. Here's one of my favorite Kinsleyisms: The week after the Republicans took control of Congress in 1994, he wrote in the *New York Times* about the GOP's Contract with America, "with its impossible combination of tax cuts and spending increases and balanced-budget promises," and concluded: "It can't be done, of course."

Oops.

Kinsley is not alone in his relentless wrongheadedness: Hostility to cutting capital-gains taxes is part of the creed of orthodox liberalism. A few years ago, Jonathan Chait, Kinsley's understudy at *The New Republic*, attacked yours truly in an article entitled—what else?—"Less is Moore." It was a gallant attempt to overthrow the irrefutable logic of supply-side tax cuts, particular-

Mr. Moore is president of the Club for Growth.

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ly the famous Laffer Curve insight that tax-rate cuts can produce more revenue for the government.

When Republicans passed the Archer-Roth capital-gains-rate cut in 1997, they set up a nifty real-life experiment. In a letter to *The New Republic*, I challenged Chait and his fellow editors to a $2,000 wager on the issue. My position was this: Over the next five years, with the new 20 percent capital-gains rate, the federal government would collect more, not less, in inflation-adjusted revenue from the capital-gains tax than it had in the previous five years (when the rate had been 28 percent). Chait declined, mentioning something about people transferring income out of wages and into capital gains, leaving overall revenues unchanged or lower.

For all their apparent self-confidence, liberals don't like putting their money where their mouth is. And it's a good thing too, or they would be a lot poorer. The Archer-Roth tax cut took effect in May 1997, so we've now had three years of experience with the lower rate. What have we learned? That those who criticized supply-side economics were dead wrong.

The latest tax-collection data from the Treasury Department indicate that capital-gains revenues have exploded. In 1996, the last year with the 28 percent rate, the government collected $62 billion in capital-gains receipts. But look what has happened:

	Tax Rate	Capital Gains Taxes
1996	28%	$62 billion
1997	20%	$79 billion
1998	20%	$89 billion
1999	20%	$110 billion (est.)

The 1999 estimate is based on IRS data collected by economist (and NR contributing editor) Lawrence Kudlow. In three years, the tax receipts are up an astonishing 74 percent, even though the tax rate is down by almost 30 percent. This is the Laffer Curve in spades.

But Michael Kinsley has derided tax cuts as "the politics of the free lunch." In 1989, he wrote that if a proposed capital-gains tax cut went into effect, the tax bill for people making over $200,000 a year would be decreased by an average of $25,000. The new statistics prove that this is impossible. If Kinsley is right that the rich pay most of the capital-gains taxes, and if capital-gains tax revenues have surged with the lower rate, then the rich must be paying *more* in taxes now. A class warrior like Kinsley should be in a state of euphoria.

■

Cutting the capital-gains tax makes business in general instantaneously more valuable.

■

Kinsley was also wrong in accepting the prediction of the congressional Joint Tax Committee that we would lose $75 billion in revenues if we cut the tax. This committee still uses "static" revenue models designed back in the Stone Age of economics, when forecasters believed that tax-rate changes didn't much affect people's behavior. That's why its crystal ball predicted a $75 billion revenue loss—when, in fact, based on current trends, we will have about a $100 billion gain for the government.

These are gargantuan errors. If you were to take a plane trip from Chicago to Detroit, and somehow ended up on a different continent, you'd be dealing in roughly the same magnitude of miscalculation. What's really infuriating is that the congressional economists are still using this same model for their economic predictions. Ask them, even now, what would happen if we cut the rate to 15 percent, and they reflexively respond that the government would lose revenue.

In the face of undeniable economic facts, some opponents of tax cuts get a little desperate. Edward Cohn admitted in the liberal *American Prospect* that capital-gains revenues are way up—how could he not?—but suggested that supply-siders are "making wild-eyed predictions . . . and then fudging or misinterpreting the numbers." How? The revenues, he says, have been generated by the rising stock market, not by Congress's tax policy. The *Washington Post* recently made exactly the same claim. But this argument neglects the interconnectedness of the economy. If you cut the capital-gains tax, you increase the after-tax value of capital, and thus the after-tax rate of return on stocks. Cutting the capital-gains tax makes technology, computers, factories, and business in general instantaneously more valuable.

And, when you combine tax-rate reductions on capital with diminishing inflation rates, you get a glorious bull market. A 1999 study by the American Council for Capital Formation and the economic-forecasting firm DRI estimates that at least 25 percent of the stock market run-up in 1998 and 1999 was inspired by the Archer-Roth tax cut.

Let's return to Jonathan Chait and his invective against "voodoo zealotry." Chait's ostensible reason for declining my wager was his theory that a rise in capital-gains revenues would come only at the expense of lost income-tax revenues.

In this view, Chait was simply echoing a longstanding theory of Mike Kinsley. But these two have the story exactly backwards. Over the past three years, individual income-tax revenues have increased by $100 billion a year—a 10 percent annual increase. Whenever you cut one tax rate, you will almost always get more revenues from all other tax sources. For example, the Reagan income-tax-rate cuts in 1981 caused an unexpected surge in payroll-tax receipts and state and local tax collections.

So the lost-revenue argument is a hoax: Cutting taxes increases revenue. But this is, essentially, a side issue. The purpose of cutting the capital-gains tax is not to maximize revenues for the government. (Cato Institute president Ed Crane reminds me that the high revenues produced by the tax cuts are an argument *against* cutting the tax.) The purpose, rather, is to maximize the creation of private wealth. A capital-gains tax hurts the process of wealth cre-

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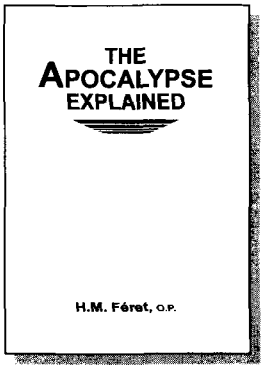

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ation, because it is merely a punitive second layer of tax. The value of a capital asset is the discounted present value of the revenue stream it produces. Under a rational tax system, we would tax the income stream or the asset value, but not both. But if we ended this double tax on investment, the economy would generate more risk-taking, more productivity, higher profits, and rising wages.

If cutting the rate to 20 percent produced more revenue and more economic growth, let's have more of the same. Congressional Republicans, along with pro-growth Democrats like Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, should seize the moment to press aggressively for further capital-gains reductions. And they shouldn't flinch when Kinsley and his associates attack them with class-warfare rhetoric. The political constituency for growth policies like capital-gains cuts has mushroomed in recent years. More Americans than ever before—52 percent of households—own stocks. In the past ten years, the number of Americans who are millionaires has tripled. There are now three times more shareholders than union workers.

■

It's paradoxical but true that the only policy that could possibly soak the rich would be a capital-gains tax cut.

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George Gilder, one of the godfathers of the supply-side revolution, recently wrote that the only policy that could unbalance the budget today would be a large tax increase. He's right. And it's paradoxical, but true, that the only policy that could possibly soak the rich would be a capital-gains tax cut. What's more, it would have the benefit of creating even more rich to soak.

Here is Michael Kinsley, one last time: "The losers [from a capital-gains cut] are many, but diffuse and largely ignorant." But there are no losers from a capital-gains cut, except for those who simply indulge in a reflexive hatred of the rich. And, yes, they are largely ignorant. **NR**

■ **BRITAIN** ■

Phony Tony—and Cronies

Blair at a crossroads

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

It all began so well. Just three years ago, Tony Blair won a landslide election. Here was a prime minister with a matey grin and a majority so large that he could do with Britain whatever he liked. Socialism, Blair promised, had evolved into New Labour, quite a different thing, a Third Way, neither socialist nor capitalist, but a "project" in its own right. "Trust me," Blair likes to repeat. Politics in this view is national group therapy. The key word is "inclusive" and the purpose of it all is modernization. The next century would belong to the Left. If Blair had his way, the Conservatives would never again be in office. And this seemed possible. The outgoing prime minister, John Major, had spun in tiny circles on the great issue of Britain's future relationship with Europe, and wrung his hands about everything else. The Conservatives were in pitiful shape. Their new leader, William Hague, had to find his feet, and impose an authority of his own on his shattered party. Blair had no opposition to fear.

Blair is often accused of being a control freak. Not so. What he has done is to set in motion processes which are bound to escape control in unpredictable directions. He is what the French call a *touche à tout*, someone under compulsion to meddle with everything for the sake of meddling. Previous experience, or tried and tested tradition, do not count. As in a garage sale, everything must go.

The consequences are now visible. First and foremost is devolution, a novelty whereby the Scots have acquired a parliament of their own, and the Welsh an assembly, and Ulster has been set on a path which eventually must result in a united Ireland. There is little popular demand for all this, and no coherence in the implementation. These measures look like way-stations. The likelihood in the medium term is that the Celtic countries will become independent, thus breaking up the United Kingdom. In response, English nationalism is coming to birth. To some of the English, this hybrid creature offers a proud identity, but to others it means soccer hooliganism, hatred of immigrants, and a general cause for lawlessness.

Even more of a threat to historic identity is Blair's stated intention to take Britain into the new European state, indeed empire, which is now arising. In the current domestic climate, this is divisive enough to carry the potential for civil disobedience. Opinion polls show that three-quarters of the electorate now oppose further loss of national sovereignty, and as many as a third implacably wish to withdraw altogether from Europe. Recent elections to the European parliament in Brussels proved a disaster for Blair. For the time being he disregards this warning and continues to grin: "Trust me." But he is spinning in the same dizzy circles as his predecessor, Mr. Major, unable to advance or retreat.

What has happened already to the Westminster parliament is without precedent. Passive while its powers hive off to Scotland and Wales and Brussels, the House of Commons has been its own willing executioner. Blair himself has attended a paltry 5 percent of parliamentary votes, the worst voting record of any prime minister, and evidence of the contempt in which he holds the House. No previous prime minister had lower than a 50 percent voting record. Going further, Blair has abolished the right of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords, ostensibly because they do not deserve the privilege, but actually for the party political reason that they are usually Conservatives. Their successors promise to be chosen from the pool known as "Tony's cronies." Then too, London itself has a new mayoralty. Blair's candidate for the post was a New Labour apparatchik. An old-fashioned socialist, "Red Ken" Livingstone, stood and won resoundingly, blowing a huge and homegrown raspberry at Blair.

So a coalition has been building, a

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Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)", in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories". In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millenium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem", let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem".

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem".

"Settlements". When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements", with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements", too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees". In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps", so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians", the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war.

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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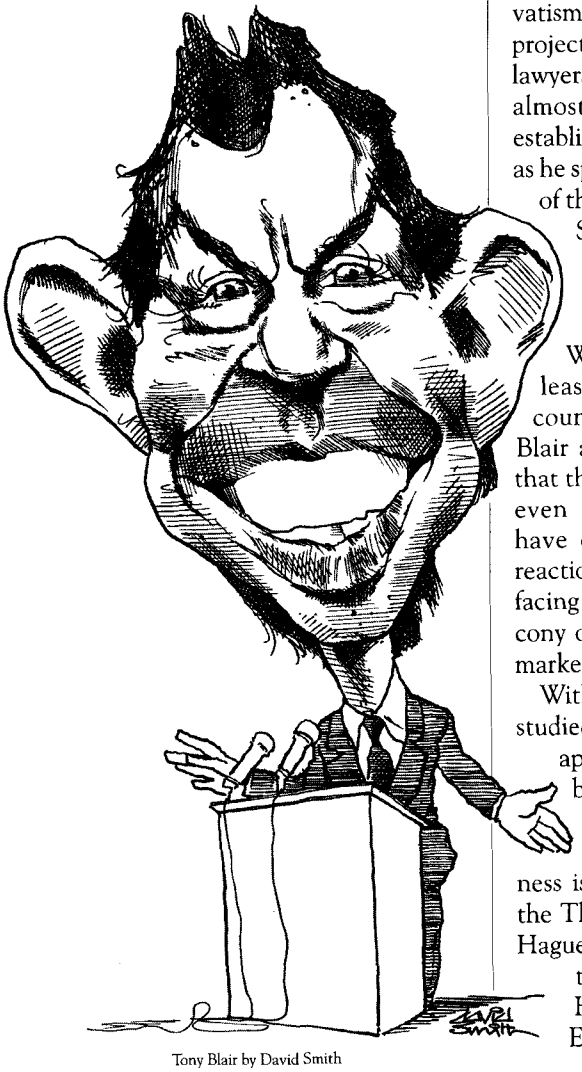
disparate coalition of the discontented Right and the disappointed Left. Not all of this is Blair's fault. Thanks to mad-cow disease and Brussels policy on agriculture, farming has been ruined on a scale never previously seen. But this is the moment Blair chooses to support a ban on fox-hunting, an anti-libertarian measure in itself as well as an example of urban class war against the countryside. The spotlight also falls on the inadequacies of the national-health system and its hospitals, supposedly the ideological core of the socialist party, its proudest achievement. A million patients are waiting, sometimes in dire conditions, for medical attention which is ceaselessly postponed.

Small incidents of daily life sometimes affect national mood more than great issues. Tony Martin is a farmer and landowner who shot at three burglars in his home, and killed one. Between them, these burglars had 122 convictions, offering astonishing examples of the overall failure to tackle crime. In what was nationally perceived as scandalous proof that the law has more regard for criminals than for victims, it was Mr. Martin who went to prison, with a life sentence. A girl called Laura Spence from a state school applied for a place at Oxford University, was rejected, but then accepted at Harvard. Oxford proved that its selection process had been scrupulously fair, but a cry went up from the government that this was elitism at Laura's expense. New Labour evidently wages class warfare quite as gladly as Old Socialism did.



Tony Blair by David Smith

Modernization turns out to be a euphemism for political correctness, and that has nothing whatever to do with Blair's vaunted "inclusiveness." His frustration that he is perceived as a meddler spilled out in public at the last annual conference of his party. There, in a speech of unusual vehemence, he railed against "the forces of conservatism" alleged to be holding back his project. These dark forces are teachers, lawyers, trade unionists, civil servants, almost anyone with public duties or established rules to follow. Eyes rolling as he spoke, he gave a passable imitation of the ideological secretary of a minor Soviet republic railing against enemies of the people.

And a riposte has just been given by the ladies of the Women's Institute, perhaps the least politicized association in the country. At their annual meeting, Blair addressed them so patronizingly that they gave him a slow handclap and even booed. Ladies! Commentators have compared Blair's dumbfounded reaction to that of President Ceausescu facing Romanian protesters on the balcony of a palace at the moment which marked his downfall.

With those evangelical eyeballs and studied look-at-me grin, Blair suddenly appears to be an overgrown schoolboy, playing with things beyond his understanding, essentially a comic figure. Political correctness is only fad; there is no "project"; the Third Way is blather. Whether Mr. Hague and the Conservative party can take advantage is something else. Hague is the more intelligent man. Extremely witty, he has a great deal of fun at Blair's expense, reinforcing the perception that in the end Blair and his pretensions will be laughed out of court. Hague is poorly supported by his party, and too many of his colleagues are mediocre, without genuine conservative convictions. But the next election, probably only a year away, may not be quite the foregone conclusion it appeared in the early pink flush of New Labour. **NR**

■ SPORTS ■

The Longest, Awfulest Game

Against soccer

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

ONE of my earliest recollections from an English childhood is of sitting with my father as he listened to the Saturday-afternoon soccer game on our family radio. The voice of the commentator was clear enough—a man talking—but what was that other sound behind it? Always present, sometimes a mere murmur, rising now to a roar as the commentary became faster and more excited, now subsiding again, it rolled and seethed in a vaguely oceanic way that struck my infant fancy as dark and menacing. I actually had no idea what it was, but I felt sure it was a thing I wanted no part of. The aversion stayed with me, and I spent my formative years avoiding soccer, so far as it *can* be avoided in a soccer-mad country on the fringes of a soccer-crazed continent. To this day I do not understand the offside rule. Eventually I came to the United States, where—glory, hallelujah!—there is no soccer.

Well, there is *some*, of course. One of the hardy perennials of American newspaper rooms is the "rebirth of American soccer" story. We had it a year ago, when the U.S. team won the 1999 Women's World Cup—remember that

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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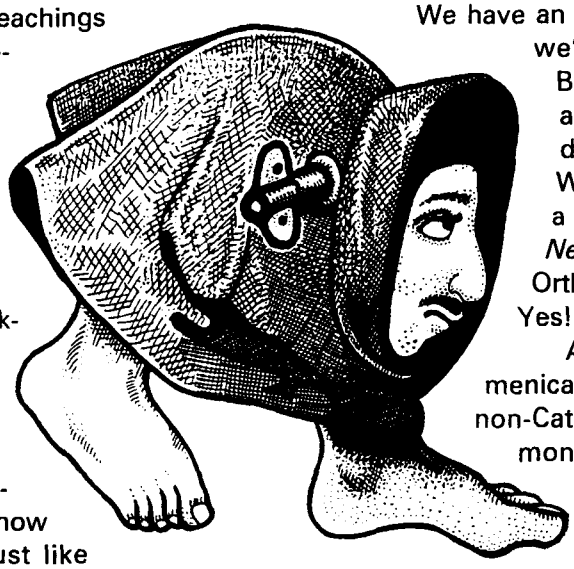
Why Are Catholics Such Cowards?

The Vatican thunders against abortion, priestesses, same-sex "marriage," assisted suicide, illicit sex, consumerism, smutty sex education, defective theology, and more. But walk into your average parish. *Where's the beef?*

All we get are *crumbs*: balloons or clowns or liturgical dancers or banners with greeting-card sentiments, but always platitudinous homilies. We don't hear about the Church's teachings on abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, pre-marital sex, pornography, birth control, the indissolubility of marriage, Hell, etc. *Why not?* "Too controversial," whines the cowardly pastor. Pop psychology and feel-good "theology" are all the go. Shack-ups and homosexual partnerships are considered morally equivalent to Holy Matrimony, for Father Fluff doesn't refer to husbands and wives as husbands and wives anymore — now he calls them "partners," just like people in immoral unions, lest those living in sin feel "marginalized" or, well, sinful. Indeed, sin and repentance are passé, prompting one to wonder why Christ bothered to get crucified and why the martyrs chose death over compromising the Faith.



Wimpy clerics, deathly afraid of being Politically Incorrect, keep the full Catholic message from us. We're being robbed of our history, doctrine, moral resources, and intellectual heritage. No wonder many Catholics, who don't have a clue as to what Catholicism stands for, fall for anything our decadent culture entices them with!

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girl in the sports bra with her well-buffed arms raised in triumph? We had it in 1996 with the launch of Major League Soccer, the latest attempt to organize the professional game nationwide here; and we had it in 1967 with the previous attempt, the North American Soccer League, which folded in 1984. No doubt the "rebirth" story was wheeled out in 1925, when a Scottish immigrant named Archie Stark concluded the American Soccer League season with 67 goals for Bethlehem Steel, still the world record for a first-division pro league. Yet soccer has, as its U.S. promoters whine, "never gained public acceptance" here. Various theories are advanced to explain this.

What really needs explaining is not why Americans do not care to watch soccer, but why the rest of the world does. With the probable exception of cricket, it is the most boring game ever devised, and has been trending in the direction of utter eventlessness for several decades. One reason Archie Stark's record is still unbroken is that over the last 50 years soccer defense has developed much more rapidly than offense, so that final scores of 0–0 and "penalty shootouts" (where an intractably tied game is settled by having single players kick at a goal defended only by the goalie) are now routine. It is amazing, in such a busy age, that so many people are willing to spend 90 minutes watching a game that frequently has no result.

The very inconclusiveness of soccer is, I suspect, what has made it the pet sport of the repulsive bobos—David Brooks's "bourgeois bohemians." The game is, in their eyes, relatively untainted by that knuckle-dragging, *masculine* competitiveness that disfigures the more prominent American sports. It lacks the grunted brutalities of football, the chawing and spitting and thrust-jaw confrontations of baseball, or the in-your-face trash talk of basketball. It is, they seem to think, just a more aerobic version of croquet: a nonviolent game of skill and strategy. In their soft, money-addled minds, these deluded wretches associate soccer with things "civilized" and European: with French wines and Danish pastries, with tiny, fuel-efficient cars and 18 different varieties of coffee, with universal health care and the prohibition of handguns. How wrongheaded is all this? One hardly knows where to begin.

In the first place, soccer is a safer game to play than more popular American sports only in the way that modern boxing is safer than bare-knuckle prizefighting. That is to say, there is less blood and fewer broken bones, but considerably more unseen injury—mostly to the brain. A study by Dutch and American researchers, published in the journal *Neurology* in 1998, found that professional soccer players score poorly compared with other athletes on tests of memory, planning, and visual processing, as a consequence of chronic brain injury from repeatedly

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What really needs explaining is not why Americans do not care to watch soccer, but why the rest of the world does.

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"heading" the ball or colliding with other players. Another study, written up in *Sports Medicine Digest* the previous year, reported degenerative changes in the cervical spine—that is, the bones and intervertebral tissues of the neck—in 61 percent of younger soccer players, presumably from the same causes. Those soccer moms would be doing better by their children if they switched them to skydiving programs. Or to rugby, the game of my own schooldays. Rugby players break collarbones, ribs, and noses pretty regularly, but at least they come away with their brains intact. Rugby is also a more "inclusive" sport, in the sense that there is a place on the rugby field for all physiques and all levels of skill above the irredeemably uncoordinated. Old English saying: "Football [i.e., soccer] is a game for gentlemen played by hooligans. Rugby is a game for hooligans played by gentlemen."

Talk of hooligans leads us to another reason that soccer should be banned from these United States by constitutional amendment. In those countries where it is the lead sport, it seems to attract into its following an element of the population glimpsed here only on the Jerry Springer show, or doing weed-whacker duty under armed supervision on upstate roadsides. My loathing of soccer—and indeed of hooliganism—notwithstanding, I cannot repress a shiver of national pride here, for the world leaders in soccer hooliganism are the English. The prowess of our lads was on display last month at the Euro 2000 championships in Belgium. On June 17, England beat Germany for the first time since the finals of the 1966 World Cup. (The chant of England supporters when their team plays Germany is: "Two world wars and one World Cup, doo-dah, doo-dah," to the tune of "Camptown Races.") Before the match, in the streets of the small Belgian town of Charleroi—where it was to be played—hundreds of English fans fought pitched battles with their German counterparts. Order was restored only by means of water cannon and mounted-police charges. Scores of deported English fans were flown home in a Belgian military aircraft, handcuffed and heavily guarded. Whether English preeminence in this field is the last dying flicker of our national vitality, or the presage of some new phase of world-kicking English bumptiousness, I shall not venture to speculate.

American soccer fans have not yet been infected by the spirit of hooliganism. For one thing they are middle-class, the offspring of those suburban soccer moms; for another, there are not enough of them to spawn the required subgroups of ferocious drunks. (I'll admit, very grudgingly, that most soccer fans, even in England, are law-abiding.) If the game ever does take off here, though—if it seeps down into the great American underclass—be prepared for scenes that will make the disturbances following the L.A. Lakers game last month look like schoolyard scuffles. There is something about the game that makes this inevitable. Perhaps it is soccer's remarkable ability to go on for 90 minutes with nothing at all happening that causes fans to lose their reason. Or possibly—this is my private opinion—the game was brought into the world by Satan to drive the human race mad. There was actually, once, a *war* fought over a soccer game: El Salvador vs. Honduras, 1969, two thousand dead (I do not know the game score). Now I hear again that sinister seething murmur from Dad's radio. America: Be warned! **NR**

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■ COVER STORY ■

Hillary R.

Will New York save the Queen?

NOEMIE EMERY

'HISTORY in the Making!" screamed the podium banner at the state convention crowning Hillary Clinton—and for once, a slogan was right. This is the first time the wife of a president, having moved in effect out of the White House, is running for office; running, in essence, as Queen. And this is not even Hillary's first strike at power. Having failed in her bid to become the unelected co-president of all of the states, she is now trying to become the elected representative of just one of them, making it uncertain if this is, in fact, progress. For some time now, she has been trying on regal themes. In late 1998, when the Senate run germinated, she was our Princess Di, bravely blonde spouse of a swine of a husband, seeking glitzy revenge on *Vogue* covers. On her "listening tour," she was our Queen Elizabeth, making gracious small talk with the populace. And, should she win, she will become (as did Robert F. Kennedy) our Bonnie Prince Charlie, the King Over the Water, a famous name seeking a speedy return to the castle. But being Queen has its drawbacks, like coups and beheadings, and some that are rather more subtle in nature. Is Hillary the dupe of her own regal role and pretensions? And might they at last do her in?

Has she a choice? The role of First Lady is the closest we come in our culture to institutionalized royalty, having been created as it was in the late 18th century, when the only model extant was royalty and the president was an elected king. In time, the president became a partisan figure and therefore lost some of his luster, but the First Lady stayed on as our national hostess, a figure of presumed benevolence. Dolley Madison was seen as a national treasure; glamorous figures like Jacqueline Kennedy and First Daughter "Princess" Alice Roosevelt Longworth were worshiped like Lady Diana; Barbara Bush made herself into an approximation of the present Queen Mother, a beloved feisty matriarch. Being First Lady is in some ways a fun job—you get to dress up and meet interesting people—but the best thing about it is that you do what you want. You can be a Social Worker in Chief, like Eleanor Roosevelt; Curator in Chief, like Jacqueline Kennedy; Homebody in Chief, like Mamie Eisenhower; or you can be like Bess Truman, and stay home out of town. You can shine your public light where and when it needs shining, and then retreat back into privacy. And all the while, you are protected by two different things: the tradition that the First Lady is assumed to be above politics; and the unwritten law that protects the families of public figures (unless they ask for it) from public criticism and attack. First Ladies are gossiped about—often cruelly—but not savaged in public. It is somehow Not Nice to attack the First Lady. She is a wife, and a maternal figure. And Queen.

The deference accorded First Ladies is conditioned on two main assumptions: that they try to do good for the country in general; and that their hidden hands remain hidden. But Hillary Clinton has always chased political power under the cover of Queen. As power player, she demanded the health-care brief from her president-husband. But as Queen, she was permitted to draft her plan in secret; to avoid questions or accountability while it was in formation; and to avoid the consequences (like being fired) when the plan bombed. A cabinet member who produced such a plan would have been questioned relentlessly. Not Hillary. After the plan tanked, she granted one interview—to the *New York Times*, weeks after it happened—in which she claimed, without being challenged, that it failed only because it had been misunderstood by the public, and unfairly and untruthfully attacked.

Having gotten power without the usual scrutiny, she tried to avoid such scrutiny after the fact. When her prior business and financial dealings were criticized, she chose a First Lady venue, *Elle* magazine, to complain about partisan attacks on herself and her husband. When she could no longer avoid a press conference, she held one, Pretty in Pink, stage-managed to the nines. Whenever she could, she

Noemie Emery lives in Alexandria, Va., and writes frequently about politics and politicians.

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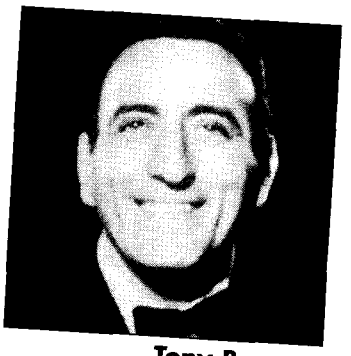

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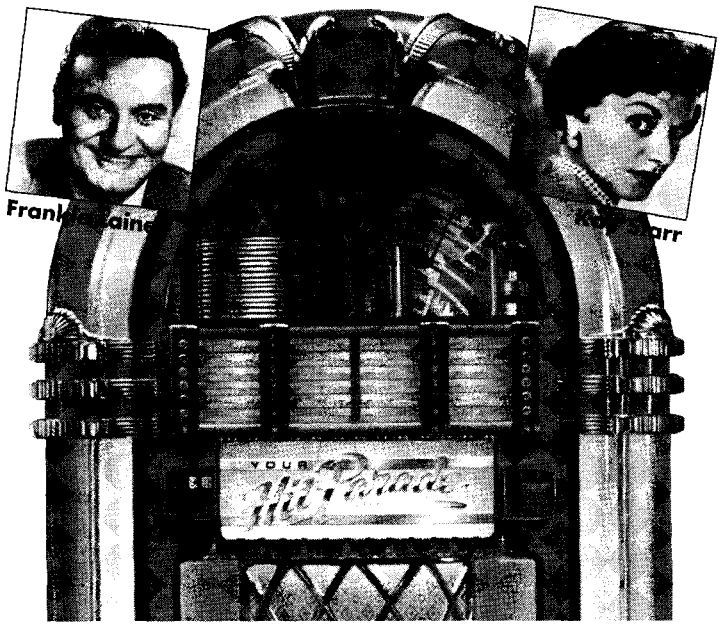

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arranged her affairs so as to escape from unpleasant reality. Good presidents—and good public figures—know that surrounding oneself with too-loyal figures leads only to ruin. But Hillary created a nest in the White House, staffed by devoted ladies-in-waiting, who only fed her rosy vision of herself. She seems to have survived the year of impeachment by walling herself off from unpleasantness. Instead of the news, she relied on carefully sanitized digests. The "dignity" she was praised for at the height of the scandal came from pretending that nothing had happened—a guise she maintains to this day. And, of course, she was able to choose all her venues: to say it was all more far-right-wing mischief to sympathetic figures on *Today*. No one was rude enough to ask her for evidence, or to advance a contrary theory. The people she talked to would never dare ask her, and the ones who would were shunned. Hillary as Queen can't behead all her critics, but she can try to avoid them. And does.

Seven years now as Queen have so accustomed Hillary to regal assumptions that this is the way she campaigns.

Seven years now as Queen—and more years before this, as Duchess of Arkansas—have so accustomed Hillary to regal assumptions that this is the way she campaigns. Thus she campaigns through artificial events, heavily controlled as to access and venue; speaks largely in platitudes, which express good intentions; and keeps a schedule heavy with ceremonial functions, which shower great praise on Herself. Gail Sheehy described Hillary's "listening tour" as more of "a nodding tour—a series of controlled and scripted tableaux that shut out the public. Only invited guests were allowed, with the media outnumbering locals two or three to one." One by one, the locals expressed their concerns and anxieties, which, amazingly, turned out to be hers. Then, there was her speech, which has always been royal: When not attacking—when she is precise and specific—she is wordy, vague, boring, and dull. Royalty, of course, are forced to be boring—they are forbidden to engage in politics—but Diana, promoting her favorite causes, was witty and pithy as compared with Hillary R.

As First Lady, Hillary talked to *Elle*, not to *Newsweek*, and gave only the most controlled interviews. As a candidate, she has tried to employ the same tactics: She talks to the local press, but not to the much tougher political specialists. She goes on news "magazines," but not the real talk shows. She faces the girlish smiles of Katie and Rosie, but not the gimlet eye of Tim Russert, the cold eye of George Will, the moist eye of ex-friend George Stephanopoulos, or the disapproving gaze of Gloria Borger. The day after he announced, Rick Lazio, her current opponent, appeared on all five Sunday talk shows, tying the record established by Monica Lewinsky's first lawyer. Rudy Giuliani, her previous opponent, had been a frequent guest on all five. But the closest Hillary Clinton has ever come to this kind of experience was an hour-long "town meeting" on CNN, overseen by Wolf Blitzer, with a prescreened and carefully selected audience, and, presumably, some things off limits. At any rate, nothing was uttered to make her uneasy. No troubling questions were asked.

It's an odd sort of campaign, free of most of the common indignities, with the proviso that Mrs. Clinton, while free herself to hurl brickbats at others, must be given the perks and deference her exalted position demands. When Lazio in his announcement speech dared to critique her credentials and theories, Mrs. Clinton complained she was being "insulted," an odd choice of words for a candidate. Still another example of her assumed privilege comes from Fred Dicker, political reporter for the *New York Post*. Why don't you grill her on sensitive matters? he was asked. Dicker responded, "We try, and the Secret Service stops us. She'll show up at a local event here. You go up to her like you would any candidate and say, 'Mrs. Clinton, can I ask you . . .,' and she runs off. She does that time after time after time. You can't get to her. She's using the resources of the federal government to prevent us from having the access you would have to any other politician." Like the guards posted at Buckingham Palace, they keep the masses away from the monarch. And they don't have to wear funny hats.

But is she "only" our Queen, or something *more* royal? The words "empress" and "saint" may come to mind. Diana had a true common touch, and an affecting desire to help other people. Queen Elizabeth II seems a quite modest person, devoted to duty, and understanding perfectly well that the devotion shown her belongs less to her as a particular person than to the institution she represents. Hillary, on the other hand, seems more like Evita, the grasping wife of a Third World aspiring tyrant, with a great gaping hunger for praise. Installed in 1993 as the first First Lady with a "real career" and a degree from an Ivy League law school, she quickly accepted heroine status as a trail-blazing generational heroine; an object of worship for all the world's women. She soon developed a penchant for regal excursions: to desolate places, where she seemed like a goddess, and often, and of course, to ghetto schools.

Then, unexpectedly, the feminist model took on a new face. In the Lewinsky scandal, she morphed into the role of the wronged, loyal woman; and then into a figure of semi-religious significance, a Holy Mother for the secular Left. Through the 1998 elections and into impeachment, she emerged as the liberals' great sainted figure, held aloft before them in all of their struggles, like the plaster images of the Madonna carried by the faithful through the village streets. When she helped some Democrats win, she was hailed as a miracle-maker. She was seen as the widow in some terrible tragedy. Gail Sheehy suggested her conduct was comparable to that of Jacqueline Kennedy in the days after her husband had been shot. Much of the commentary of this period had a religious cast to it. Jesse Jackson, of course, pulled out all the stops: "Hillary, you've walked through the rain, and you're not wet . . . You have walked through fire, and there's not a singe on your clothing." Of course, having your husband's brains and blood on your clothing is not the same thing as having his semen found on a dress belonging to another woman, but this failed to dim liberal ecstasies.

In the months between October 1998 and, say, March

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1999, Hillary could not turn around in New York or Washington (especially New York) without having the stars of Wall Street and Hollywood declaim on her brilliance, her courage, her utter nobility. Who wouldn't be moved?

It was during this period, and possibly because of this period, that she made her decision to enter the Senate race. Hillary had just come through what was perhaps the worst year of her life. Whatever peace she had made with the facts of her marriage, she had been exposed in public, as no public woman before her. The image of a marriage of mutual respect had been shattered. Whatever her husband thought of her as a political partner and strategist, she had been disrespected in a fundamental way. It was during this time that the adulation she received at these rallies may have done something like save her life. Did Bill sneak away after church to meet Monica? Alec Baldwin would say she was thrilling and glamorous. Did Bill's amours reach into the hundreds? Whoopi Goldberg would say she was unique and remarkable. Did Bill behave as if she didn't matter? Steven Spielberg would say she was the wonder of the Western world. The whole Senate dance had the feel of a courtship—the wooing, the pleading, the flowers, the compliments—and the resemblance of this in fact to a courtship may have been the reason she did make the race. No future career that she could have considered—at the World Bank, at a foundation, as a university president—could have given her at this time the fix she needed: the assurance that she was still Queen.

SHE HAD TO HAVE IT

And why else would she have run for the Senate, compared with the other opportunities she had? A senator is one of 100, and defers to his seniors. A First Lady is rare—there have been fewer than 40—and her standing is unique and mythical. A senator speaks largely on C-SPAN, and is lucky to make the inside page of the paper. A First Lady has a giant podium for life. Senators struggle to make names. First Ladies have them. In short, senators struggle to get where First Ladies are. Any of Hillary's other options might have yielded a more regal lifestyle: much more money, many more perks, and the kind of insulation she has always seemed to be after, a cushioned existence surrounded by fans. All of these were more tempting for future consumption, for 2001 and thereafter. But in the spring of 1999, when the decision was made, there was one thing only a race for the Senate could give her: a continuation of the wooing, and the buzz. Only a Senate race could have provided the opportunity for the escalating gala tributes, at which celebrities, politicians, and, of course, the president convened to pay homage to Hillary. And so the occasions began, and continued.

There was the grand coming-out of the listening tour, in July 1999, at the upstate farm of Senator Moynihan, a torch-passing moment. There was the celebration in October of Hillary's Birthday (soon, they may make it a national holiday) at the great Broadway bash thrown for her, where stars of the stage sang show tunes rewritten to flatter her, read from her book, and—surprise!—compared her to Eleanor Roosevelt. Then there was the faux announcement, the not-quite announcement, the announcement to announce her candidacy, and then the announcement itself, a giant event that filled the gymnasium at SUNY-Purchase with posters, balloons, live entertainment, and a film recounting Hillary's life. Most of the state's Democrats were in (forced) attendance, and 600 houseparties were held across the state. (In 1960, John Kennedy announced for president with a few words in the Senate Caucus Room, and a very few people around him. But then, he hadn't been a woman scorned.) When the nomination did come, it seemed anticlimactic, with Hillary hailed as "one of the great and inspiring leaders of our era" by 11,000 screaming fans. It sometimes seems the campaign is just an excuse to stage these occasions, in which she is hailed as the greatest of women, and Bill tells the whole world he loves her.

Hillary's efforts to run as a species of royalty seem to have three different expressions. One is the bland style of Queen Elizabeth II, but this tends to work best when one isn't contested. The next is the Evita-like, Roman-empress-at-the-Coliseum style, symbolized by the signs reading "Hillary!" and the abnormal hunger for tribute and compliments. But a cult of the personality works best when one has one, and Hillary's tends to turn voters off. And the third type is the heir apparent, personified by Bobby Kennedy in 1964. But as some people have pointed out rudely, being the brother of a murdered president and the wife of an impeached one are two different things. Flawed as he was, John Kennedy was an inspiring figure, a decorated war hero, and a patriot. Bill Clinton is a draft-dodger, inspiring in nothing except self-indulgence. Kennedy died before his first term was over. Clinton is nearing the end of his eighth year in office, and most people think this is more than enough. Bobby was interesting, an unconventional thinker; a New Democrat and a compassionate conservative, decades before either was thought of. Hillary is a boring thinker and woman, stuck in the failed old liberal nostrums Bobby grew out of before he was shot. Bonnie Queen Hillary doesn't quite cut it. This line deserves to die out.

Hillary's style appeared less peculiar when she was running against Giuliani, himself a quasi-imperial figure, who seemed to be running for Doge. Against a more normal figure, however, it will begin to seem more and more odd. Rick Lazio doesn't see her as the Queen, or the Madonna, or Princess Diana. He sees her as another pol. Which is what queens become, when they step down from the castle and start throwing mud, like the others. And then, of course, mud will be tossed back at them. This may be very un-queenly, but it is the price of the power one earns on one's own. Queens are remote and adored, but they are born royal, or become so through marriage. They have influence and acclaim, but not actual power. Plebeians have power, but are not beyond insult. Plebeians have to fight for power on the field. Being First Lady—in effect, being Queen—is not the best training one has for the battle, accustoming one to courtesy, reverence, a lack of accountability, and the belief that one is, or ought to be, above partisan comment. The role can serve as a springboard for diverse occupations—marrying billionaires, editing books, serving as ambassador to the United Nations, sponsoring clinics for addicts to dry out in—but may be less useful for running for office. The history Hillary Clinton makes may be that of losing. Eleanor of Aquitaine and Elizabeth I were queens who made history. But Marie Antoinette made some history too. **NR**

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The Bane that is Jane

Miss Fonda in her own mind

PETER COLLIER

DOES Jane Fonda feel remorse? It is a question we never thought we'd be asking. But there have been some interesting developments of late in what Fonda refers to as "the last third of my life": First she found Christianity, and now she tells Oprah in an interview in Winfrey's new magazine O, "I will go to my grave regretting the photograph of me in an antiaircraft carrier which looks like I was trying to shoot at American planes . . . It was the most horrible thing I could possibly have done."

Forget for a moment the malapropism of antiaircraft *carrier*, which recalls her famous spoonerism on *The Dick Cavett Show* in the '70s—in which she said that U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia had its roots in our ungodly desire for "tung and tinsten." Forget, too, other parts of this interview, in which Fonda betrays an unregenerate pride in having participated in the conscience-driven New Left along "with people like Tom Hayden who were living for more than just themselves." The fact is, it's hard to read her chat with Oprah and not feel that what Fonda finds horrible about her famous trip to North Vietnam was the photograph and "what it would look like," not the trip itself. "It was just thoughtless," she says of her impulsive decision to put on the helmet and get imaginary U.S. pilots in her gunsight. But couldn't this sentence stand as a judgment on all of her frenzied activities in the Movement? And doesn't her weird odyssey in radical politics warrant a much broader apology?

I ask this question particularly because of my own brief encounter with Jane, which warrants at least an agate-type footnote in the muddled and inchoate chronicle of her life. In January 1970, I got a call from one of her Hollywood flunkies. He told me that Jane had read a piece I'd done on radical American Indians in *Ramparts*, of which I was then an editor. She was currently in India on what turned out to be a dispiriting spiritual quest, having taken a vacation from her then-husband Roger Vadim. The flunky told me she wanted to return home to where the action was. A few days later, Jane herself called and asked if I would take her to Alcatraz and show her the Indian occupation there.

I said, naturally, that I would. When she showed up at the San Francisco wharf where we'd arranged to meet, she had her new shag haircut, and was dressed (jeans and a long-sleeved T-shirt and a macramé bag) as if on a casting call for the new role she wanted. She chattered nervously as our yacht easily broke the halfhearted blockade imposed on Alcatraz by the Coast Guard. She said she was glad finally to have returned to where it "was happening" after her "exile" in France. I joked that she might be too late, the '60s just having ended. "Oh, I hope not," she gasped.

As we tied up, she stared at the bleeding slogans the Indians had painted on the rocks: *Better Red than Dead. Indian Country.* I introduced her around. She was an amazingly quick study, seeing immediately that there was a struggle for control of the island between the tribes lined up behind the Navajos and those behind the Sioux—and that the Sioux, with the cachet of their warrior past, were politically more correct. When I left Alcatraz, she was in their corner of the old prison exercise yard, smoking their dope and listening to their tales.

Jane's friend Brooke Hayward later told me, "She has always had a nose for the prevailing winds. From the beginning, her radicalism was chic." Perhaps. But this new incarnation was certainly as strenuously sought as her other self-reinventions—as the swanlike college student who ate tapeworm eggs in the dorm to keep thin (she was terrified by memories of her mother, who had slit her own throat, in part because she felt she was getting fleshy); as the ingénue who tried to one-up her famous father by studying the Method at the Actors Studio; as the young sophisticate who moved to France and became Vadim's latest sex kitten, thus bypassing the studio system in achieving her stardom; and all the other selves to come.

Becoming the Barbarella of the Movement was by far the best self yet for Jane—a self that, unlike the others, had depth and authenticity. She immediately saw it for what it was: the role of a lifetime. Within weeks she had acquired all the lingo ("Power to the People!" were the last words in the note, written in a backhanded slant, she sent me after the day on Alcatraz) of the Movement, all the perverse dogma of its theology. She moved quickly through the predictable stages—from liberal to radical to revolutionary—that it took the rest of us years to traverse. She went from the reservation Indians I arranged for her to visit, to the gun-toting braves of the American Indian Movement; from there to the Black Panther party (calling its leader, Huey Newton, right after he emerged from jail for murdering an Oakland cop, a "great, gentle man, the only man I've ever met who approaches sainthood"); and then to the Coffee House Movement, which hung out near Army bases aiming to create deserters out of recent inductees.

She became afflicted with the Movement's working-class heroism, although it always clashed with her stubborn narcissism. Alan Myerson, who directed her in *Steelyard Blues*, later said, "I can remember when she walked onto the set one morning and some flunky came up and said, 'Good morning, Miss Fonda.' Jane looked at her and said, '*Please*, call me Jane. There are no stars anymore, just equals.' And then, almost without missing a beat, she turned and yelled out, '*Where's my dresser?*'"

She went through the Movement like *E. Coli*, winding up—by 1972—immersed in the same confusion about its future that had sidelined radicals with far longer experience, who were now asking petulantly about the Revolution, "Won't it ever get here?" Then, in what Californians of the

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next era would call a harmonic convergence, she met Tom Hayden, who happened also to be at the end of his string.

Regarded by many in the New Left as an Everyman, Hayden had just been expelled from the Red Family, a Berkeley commune that was his last stop on a route that led from civil-rights work in the South, to urban insurrection in Newark, to field marshalship of the Götterdämmerung on the streets of Chicago in 1968, to his apotheosis as the New Left's General Giap in the most important front of the war for Vietnam—the domestic struggle in America.

Hayden was living semi-incognito in Los Angeles when he met Jane at a slide show she was doing on Vietnam. Later, she said of him, as she would of other alpha males in her male-dominated universe, "He saved my life." Hayden soon functioned as her ideologue (years later, when China invaded Vietnam, she called him in a panic from her movie set and inquired, "What's our position on this?") and also as her impresario. She had been contacted by the North Vietnamese in Paris the previous year, but nothing came of it. Tom, however, was a virtual ambassador to Hanoi for the New Left, having been there several times and having long trumpeted its "rice-roots democracy." He got her an invitation and set her up with propaganda handlers.

Thus the famous picture: She sat in the antiaircraft gun—not an antiaircraft carrier—smiling at the imagined prospect of shooting down U.S. bandits coming in from above to destroy this little piece of heaven on earth. It was her summary moment. Her father would be remembered as Tom Joad, her brother Peter as Captain America in *Easy Rider*. For Jane, the role that would define her forever was a snippet of videotape a few seconds long: Hanoi Jane.

If it was horrible, as she would claim to Oprah, it was primarily so because of the imagery: It was documentary evidence of her silliness that all the intervening years—the activism in Democratic politics, the philanthropic gestures, the commanding position inside the entertainment industry, the sultry nights in Atlanta watching Chipper Jones and the boys and doing The Chop—could never wipe out. *There* was a photograph! If she was truly sorry about that trip to Hanoi, Jane should have forgotten about the antiaircraft carrier and apologized for all the other things that happened during her visit, things that were far more malicious than that moment when radical chic turned into radical kitsch.

Allowing herself to be turned into a low-budget remake of Tokyo Rose, she visited villages and amplified the usual claims of burned babies and genocide. She stopped by the Hanoi Hilton and made claims, after brief visits with battered U.S. prisoners, that their treatment was generous and humane. She made flat-out propaganda broadcasts in which each word was worth a thousand pictures: "This is Jane Fonda in Hanoi. I'm speaking to the men in the cockpits of the Phantoms, in the B-52s, in the F-4s . . . You know that when Nixon says the war is winding down he's lying. . . . All of you in your heart of hearts know the lies. You know the cheating on the body counts, the fictionalized battle reports, and the number of planes that are shot down and what the targets really are. Knowing who [is] doing the lying, should you allow these same people and these same liars to define for you who the enemy is?"

And this image in the antiaircraft gun was not nearly so horrible as what happened when she came home, after she and Tom got married—a wedding within the war, as we radicals liked to say back then; a marriage soon consecrated by a son named Troi (after Nguyen van Troi, the Viet Cong fighter martyred in 1964 when trying to assassinate Robert McNamara), although, ingeniously, also able to be called Troy when it came time to create a popular front with The People.

In 1973, a year after her infamous trip, there was the truly horrible response to the first prisoners released by Hanoi, men Jane called "liars, hypocrites, and pawns." She was livid at the charge that these men had been tortured: "Tortured men do not march smartly off planes, salute the flag, and kiss their wives. They are liars. I also want to say that these men are not heroes." One of the first contingent of POWs said that, indeed, he had not only been tortured, but that the Vietnamese had tortured him—broken his arm—for the specific purpose of forcing him to see her during her visit to North Vietnam. Jane's response was a shrug: "Nobody's perfect, not even the Vietnamese." Putting the episode behind her, she and Tom decided a year later to take advantage of what he called "the Watergate moment" to return yet again to Hanoi to shoot the documentary *Introduction to the Enemy*, an effort to show the North Vietnamese as gentle peasant nationalists who—despite all the provocations—didn't hate the Americans.

Jane Fonda by Roman Genn

These were horrible things. They were done, in one way or another, and to lesser or greater degree, by many of us back then. And it must be said that Jane deserves acknowledgment for having said anything at all about this indecent slice of history, when most of those she ran with have obeyed the only true law of the Left: Don't look back. Yet is this apology for being photographed in flagrante with her revolutionary love, tucked into all the vapid talk about her marriage and the life she envisions in her new multimillion-dollar home "in the 'hood," really enough?

Hate the sin and not the sinner, says the book Jane now professes to read. Her chat with Oprah suggests that this is an injunction she is not ready to follow, and that she is still secretly in love with both. **NR**

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Most Hated U.

A visit to Bob Jones

JAY NORDLINGER

Greenville, S.C.

FUNNY, but they don't look like beastly. They don't have horns and tails. Neither are they wearing white sheets. On the contrary, these students at Bob Jones University seem astoundingly kind, sensitive, bright, and sincere. They attend what must be the most hated university in the country. Their school has become a symbol of much that is repugnant in American life. And they have had no real chance to defend themselves in the long, trying months since "February."

That's what they call it: "February." All over campus, this word is shorthand for the controversy that occurred at the time of the South Carolina primary. Having lost to John McCain in New Hampshire, George W. Bush arrived in this state needing a victory. He hightailed it to Bob Jones, obviously trying to appeal to bedrock conservatives. It seemed nothing out of the ordinary: The school had long been a stop on the Republican trail. Ronald Reagan had been here; the first George Bush had been here; Bob Dole had been here. But when George W. Bush addressed these students—giving his usual, milquetoast speech—a storm broke out. Its reverberations are being felt still.

The school was held to be a) racist and b) anti-Catholic. Bush, unlike the pols who had preceded him, was tainted. McCain and the national press played the governor's visit for all it was worth. Bush won the South Carolina primary, but stumbled again in Michigan. McCain's camp placed calls to Catholic households—these were the notorious "Catholic Voter Alerts"—warning that Bush was in league with the worst element. Liberal journalists who had never before had a friendly word to say about religion suddenly had an opportunity to pose as Defenders of the Faith. Sen. Bob Torricelli, Democrat of New Jersey, introduced a resolution condemning the university. Bush went on to secure the nomination, but Democrats—gleeful—vowed to hang Bob Jones around the candidate's neck all the way to November.

These same Democrats have labeled Bush's recent travels the "Bob Jones Redemption Tour." The Democratic National Committee even had T-shirts printed up to this effect. The committee has advised candidates around the country to "play the Bob Jones card" against the GOP this fall. So damaging is Bush's Bob Jones appearance thought to be, many believe that he must name a Catholic running mate, as though in repentance. (Of course, they also think that such a move would be wise politics even if "February" had never taken place.) BJU—a Christian-fundamentalist institution founded in 1927—is now not only the most despised school in America; it is also one of the best known.

All of this leaves people on campus shaking their heads in amazement. "It's crazy," says the school's president, Bob Jones III. "Just crazy." Students report that, before the controversy, some of their friends thought BJU was a golf school—as in Bobby Jones. Still others thought of Kool-Aid—as in Jim Jones, who led a mass suicide in the 1970s. Says one sophomore, Adam Lee, "The coverage has been unreal. I mean, why are we so important? Of course, we believe we are very special, but this is kind of ridiculous." People here agree that the controversy has strengthened them: renewed their commitment to their faith, their campus, and one another. A senior, Eva Motter, points out that Christians are enjoined to "rejoice in adversity" and to "confound the wise." She and others view "February" as God's way, however unexpected, of lifting the university up.

Naturally, not everyone here is totally at ease with the school's widespread notoriety. When fundamentalists brush up against the larger world, they tend to get burned. Members of this community are distrustful of journalists, who make little effort to understand them or their doctrine. They are happy to stand apart from the world—it is a matter of honor, and Biblical injunction—but they would also like to be understood, listened to, rather than dismissed as bigots, boobs, and worse. A university spokesman, Jonathan Pait, notes that most outsiders assume "we're a bunch of kooks in high-water pants—polyester, of course." Complains Eva Motter: "People don't bother to find out who we are. Our accusers haven't been here. They're influenced by the media, and they take what the media says at face value."

BLACK AND WHITE

The indictment against Bob Jones contains the two aforementioned counts: racism and anti-Catholicism. The charge of racism stems mainly from the school's most infamous rule—a ban on interracial dating. In fact, this is the issue over which Bob Jones lost its tax exemption in 1983. The policy was rescinded in March of this year, following the Bush–McCain fiasco. (Said McCain, speaking rhetorically to the campus, "Thank goodness: Now you're into the 18th century. Try the 21st century.")

One of the problems with the rule, BJU-ers plead, is that it was next to impossible to explain to outsiders. However you sliced it, it looked baldly and obnoxiously racist. The ban, they say, had nothing to do with true racism—the belief that some races are inferior to others. Rather, it related to doctrinal notions involving one-world government, the Antichrist, and ecumenism generally. To an ear not attuned to fundamentalism, it has something to do with the U.N. In any case, says President Jones, "the policy was never talked about, never preached about, never taught about—was no big deal. But to the media, it was everything. They made it the defining fact about BJU. And it's just not us. We are not racists. And I was tired of seeing them do that to us. Our mission here—our God-called mission—is so much greater, so much more important. So I said, 'If this thing is standing between us and that mission, let's leave it aside, so we can get on with life.'"

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The student body, unsurprisingly, is largely white, although not without some color—a stroll through the dining hall is proof enough of that. Kids come here from all 50 states and over 40 different countries. Ask about racial numbers, though, and school officials bristle. They argue a case that, years ago, would have been regarded as nobly liberal. "We don't concern ourselves with racial statistics," says Jonathan Pait, "because we treat our students as individuals, as sons and daughters of God, as members of our family. We don't have any quotas here or anything like that. We're just people." He makes the point that it is other, secular schools that are obsessed with race—not Bob Jones. These other institutions think according to race, admit by race, organize by race. "And here it means nothing. Yet we're the ones who are supposed to be racist! It makes me mad."

The students, too, are stung by the image of racism. "That's what hurts the most," says David Schwingle, a senior. "You know you're not a racist, but people may assume you are." To be a BJU student is, in a sense, to be presumed guilty. Indeed, these kids bear a burden that is probably unique in all the land: They are required to defend their school, and to justify their presence at it. Adam Lee had a particularly troubling experience. "I was undergoing some medical treatment, and was taking some stress tests. In the middle of them, the doctor asked me where I was from, where I went to school—the normal questions. And when I told him, he blew up at me. He totally ignored the tests." Talk about stress.

Another senior, Catherine McQuaid, emphasizes that about 40 percent of the students here do volunteer work in Greenville—out among the poorest, who are predominantly black and Hispanic. She says, not a little peeved, "I grew up in Chicago, and my best friends were black or other minorities. I have had two minority roommates since I came here. It's just not something we think about. I work with black kids, help them with their homework before their parents get home so they don't have to be latchkey kids. Really, I don't think I've ever run into someone here at Bob Jones who's manifested any sort of racist attitude at all."

Some find it particularly painful that black high-school students—fundamentalist ones—may shrink from attending BJU because of what they hear about it. "So," says Adam Lee, "there's a joy in my heart when I see a black freshman on campus. I go out of my way to get to know him. In my church back home"—this is in Jamesburg, N.J.—"there are all kinds of people: from Africa, from the islands, and so on. I like that sort of environment."

All of us have been conditioned to scoff at defenses of the some-of-my-best-friends-are-black variety. But, when utterly earnest—even importunate—they have a certain power.

CHURCH VS. CHURCH

Then there is the matter of anti-Catholicism. When George W. Bush had piqued interest in the school, it was noticed that BJU had on its website some harshly anti-Catholic material. This was found in the (electronic) archives of a magazine called *Faith for the Family*, published at Bob Jones from 1973 to 1986. Articles from this periodical include language that shocks the modern sensibility. "Satanic," for example, is not the fare of everyday conversation in most places. But to contend that these writings are especially anti-Catholic is somewhat curious. They oppose (to put it mildly) any religion at all that differs from Bob Jones-style fundamentalism. They give hell—literally—to Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, "liberal Protestants," and other Christian sects, to say nothing of Muslims, Hindus, and so on. One piece is entitled "Seventh-Day Adventism: Christian or Cult?" (In the world of BJU, this is not exactly a stumper.)

Yet, in the midst of all this equal-opportunity vituperating, it was the anti-Catholicism that hogged most of the attention. All of it, really. Exhibit A in the case against the university was "Romanism and the Charismatic Movement" by Bob Jones Jr., late father of the current president (and son of the school's founder). The article's subhead? "Because they ignore the Word of God, both papists and charismatics are doing the work of the devil." Rough stuff. But John McCain did not issue "Charismatic Voter Alerts" in Michigan. And there is no clamor for Bush to anoint a charismatic running mate (though a little charisma never hurt a candidate).

As with the interracial-dating question, BJU-ers find it hard to explain to others that, despite their extraordinary language, they are not anti-Catholic or anti-anyone else. The problem, they say, is that society at large does not take religion seriously and is "theologically illiterate." Many here stress that they have better relations with serious Catholics—orthodox, true-believing ones—than they do with those who are merely social, or casual, Catholics. In other words, Bob Jones III would be more comfortable with a traditional priest or nun than with a Massachusetts political hand. People who are adamant about religion, one way or another, tend to understand one another, to know what is at stake. And they are also apt to be, like the BJU community, defiantly anti-ecumenical.

As Jonathan Pait puts it, "We don't seek dialogue, we don't seek common ground, we don't make concessions. We stand firm on what we believe. But we accept people where they are. And the Bible commands us to love." In modern America, says President Jones, "if you don't say the politically correct thing, or if you stand strong on what you believe—in our case, salvation by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ; if you're not promoting the ecumenical agenda, where everybody's beliefs have to be on parity and equally right—this whole postmodern idea that two opposing views can both be right; if you don't do that, why, you're a bigot or you're intolerant. And that is nonsensical."

Kristel Pender, an education major from Kansas City, gets to the nub of it: "We're trying to serve the Lord here, as best we can. That doesn't mean we hate other people. Just the opposite." Adds Catherine McQuaid, "I come from a Catholic background. I was raised a Catholic, and my father is a Catholic. It was hard for him at first, but after years of contact with Bob Jones, he has come to trust the people here and know that they do not hate Catholics, that they have a love for all people, and that he can trust them with the education of his children."

Jeremy McMorris, a recent graduate from Mio, Mich., is forthright, in typical BJU fashion: "If what we say is true, then what Catholics say cannot be true; and if what they say is

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true, then what we say cannot be true. It's not that we hate them. It's just that, when you have 100 percent gusto about something, you are often required to say no and refuse to accept something else. The world may see that as hatred, and if we're coming across in a hateful manner, then shame on us and we need to change. But our message is one of love, and that was Christ's message."

'STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS'

This is a far, far cry from your standard American university: outwardly, inwardly. The people—young and old—are almost freakishly polite. They talk openly about God and their Savior, as others might talk about politics, sports, or sex. They say grace before meals. Their campus is dotted with Biblical quotations. They don't have to lock up their belongings. There is no litter, no graffiti, no blaring rock music (or any, for that matter), no cursing, no drinking, no smoking, no shouting. In other words, it is hell for most college students. But for these, it is very heaven. The rules and atmosphere, they insist, are liberating, enabling them to concentrate on what matters: becoming "soldiers for Christ."

BJU kids know full well that they are different; they have no illusions about what others think of them. They can't help wondering, though, why, in a country chock-full of differences—one that prides itself, increasingly, on differences—they are singled out for calumny. They pounce on the fact that Al Gore, also during the primary season, spoke at an Orthodox synagogue in New York. Only men and boys were allowed to hear him; women and girls stood outside. Yet no one tagged him with sexism. The vice president had merely met Americans where they were. No political rival and no journalist pretended that Gore had endorsed the views or practices of his audience.

One of the things that "February" has done is fire up school spirit. An embattled platoon is likely to be a feistier, gutsier one. A high moment occurred on March 3, when President Jones appeared on Larry King's CNN program to explain himself and his campus. People here have tremendous respect for King, and an almost pathetic gratitude to him, for what they see as his fairness. On the big night, the students watched on wide-screen TVs. There were cheers, tears, high-fives. Says Jeremy McMorris, "It was kind of like watching your team win the Super Bowl." David Schwingle allows that "I was so excited, I went out and bought a new [Bob Jones] T-shirt."

If BJU is a mystery to the rest of the world, the rest of the world is, to a degree, a mystery to BJU. Says Adam Lee, "Yes, we dress differently, we act differently. When people come here, they see people who are clean-cut, who have morals and standards, who stand up for something they believe in, who just want to help others and love and spread the Word of the Lord . . . and they balk. Why?" And yet the students don't spend too long fretting over general opinion. "We know that the world will frown on us," says Jeremy McMorris. "We expect that. The time to be worried is when the world smiles on us. We are supposed to be strangers and pilgrims," journeying toward a "strait gate."

No one here seems weary of the fight, or oppressed by societal ridicule, or tempted to draw back. Adam Lee puts it with a fervency rarely witnessed: "Christians are supposed to have a joy when they suffer for Christ. Christ suffered for us. I don't necessarily relish it, but it's just another way of saying, 'Lord, I love you, I want to serve you, I want to stand up for you.' In the early church, people were *really* persecuted. We face nothing by comparison. People were imprisoned, forced into catacombs, set on fire, fed to lions. They would *die* for their faith. They *believed* in something *We* believe in something. We know we're different from the world, sure—but because of Christ. Because of our love for him."

Damn strange kids, these. They appear, like the Biblical Nathanael, wholly without guile. They are unfazed by materialism. They can lift their gazes above their own groins. They think, evidently, on high things. Is there room for them in this allegedly diversity-mad country of ours? Can we spare them a tile in our "gorgeous mosaic"? Are they so leprous that they are unfit even to be spoken to by presidential candidates? The weird thing is this: For people who are supposed to be such haters, they are startlingly loving, gentle. And because they stand with their chins up against the majority's scorn, they are brave.

You could say—and hardly anyone would contradict you—that Bob Jones students are the uncoolest kids in America. But that, of course, would depend on what you mean by cool. **NR**

The Capital Question

Two issues ago, NR *published a piece by Carl M. Cannon arguing that the death penalty ran too great a risk of executing the innocent ("The Problem with the Chair: A Conservative Case Against Capital Punishment"). The piece provoked a debate, as intended. Below are three further reflections on this troublesome matter.*

A Logical and Just Practice

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG identifies three justifications for punishing criminals: deterrence, retribution, and incapacitation. A possible fourth—reforming the criminal's character—he dismisses as unachievable. It is in any event hardly relevant to the death penalty unless "reform" is used in a highly metaphorical sense. Of these justifications two are invariably employed in the debate over capital punishment: deterrence and retribution.

The general impression is that opponents of capital punishment reject both justifications. That is not so.

Almost no one denies that the death penalty deters murder. What critics contend is that it is not a *unique* deterrent; severe penalties such as life imprisonment would do as well. But in fact, some statistical evidence suggests that life imprisonment

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is a lesser deterrent than death. We need not rely on statistics alone, however. The plain fact is that the severe alternatives to capital punishment fade away on examination.

A life sentence in theory is often six years' imprisonment in practice. The recent release of terrorist murderers in Britain as a result of the Northern Ireland "peace process" contradicted countless assurances by British ministers that they would serve their full terms. Many of these assurances were responses to demands that death be imposed on the murderers.

Even if we concede that the death penalty and life imprisonment deter about equally, that does not constitute a clear case against one unless we are given good reasons for preferring the other. And here retribution comes in.

Supporters of capital punishment contend that a punishment should be in some sense proportionate to the offense; opponents reply that such retribution, and the "judicial murder" it supports, are relics of barbarism incompatible with a civilized society.

In fact, retribution limits capital punishment (and all other punishments) as much as it supports them. Eighteenth-century juries—who cannot be suspected of softness on crime—refused to send people to the gallows for sheep-stealing because they thought the penalty unduly harsh. Yet if deterrence were the sole justification for punishing criminals, we might logically impose the death penalty for parking violations and upward. If retribution is a necessary element in punishment, then, does it justify or even require the death penalty? Death is certainly a proportionate penalty for murder—"an eye for an eye," etc. Most of us would feel, however, that not all murders are equally serious or deserving of equal punishment. A proportionate approach to punishment would distinguish between different murders as between different burglaries. Maternal infanticide, for instance, has traditionally received lighter punishment than other homicides because it was felt that nursing mothers were often under great strain and not always in control of their reactions.

Retribution would therefore reserve capital punishment for the most terrible cases—perpetrators of genocide, serial murderers, calculating poisoners. In such cases, however, the limiting effect of retribution would also require the death penalty rather than permanent incarceration because it would be too *cruel* to put a man in prison with the words "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here." Death, by contrast, offers either hope or oblivion—both preferable to a living hell.

All this would be beside the point if retribution and capital punishment were incompatible with civilization. But that is plainly not the case. Death was the conventional penalty for murder in every civilized country until the 1950s. It is still supported by popular majorities in many European countries where it has been legally abolished. And its abolition there reflects not the fact that Europeans are more civilized than Americans but that their elites are more liberal and their political systems less democratic. In short, the abolitionist argument redefines the word "civilized" to mean "opposed to capital punishment." Thus translated, the sentence "a civilized person is opposed to capital punishment" becomes "a person opposed to capital punishment is opposed to capital punishment," and hence an uninteresting tautology.

It is, of course, uncivilized to execute innocent persons. And though no human institution can be entirely free from error, that means there must be both very strict safeguards against wrongful conviction and some important benefit that corresponds to the risk of such executions.

The necessary safeguards are provided by a comprehensive system of appeals. And it is absurd to cite successful appeals as indicating legal "errors" that require abolishing capital punishment. The success of these appeals is shown by the fact that there have been only a handful of wrongful executions.

The necessary benefit is provided by the third justification for punishment, one almost never discussed in the context of the death penalty, namely incapacitation—the fact that murderers, once executed, cannot harm anyone again. This is far from being a merely theoretical benefit. As Prof. Paul G. Cassell pointed out in his testimony to the House Judiciary Committee in 1993: "Of the roughly 52,000 state prison inmates serving time for murder in 1984, an estimated 810 had previously been convicted of murder and had killed 821 persons following those convictions. Executing each of these inmates following their initial murder conviction would have saved 821 innocent lives."

Each of those 821 victims is a mute witness to the constant value of capital punishment to set against the handful of mute witnesses to its occasional tragic failure. And since some murderers murder again in prison, an equal protection cannot be obtained by ending parole. Unless, of course, we don't mind if criminals are murdered.

The Chair Deters

WILLIAM TUCKER

THE death penalty has become the issue du jour. It isn't too hard to account for this. Liberals see George W. Bush as vulnerable on the issue. But Bush should be congratulated for leading a crusade against the number-one public-health and safety issue of the last 35 years: the astonishing national epidemic of *felony murder*.

Let's be clear about what the death penalty can and can't do.

Executions probably don't deter *"crimes of passion."* Arguments between spouses, friends, or lovers that escalate into murder probably won't be deterred because there is no *rational* process leading to this sort of homicide. Tempers flare, people lose control of their emotions and strike out. At least that's what the defense attorneys tell us.

The place where the death penalty clearly intercedes in a *rational* thought process is *felony* murder. This is murder committed in the course of another crime—most commonly robbery, burglary, or rape. A person who is robbing a stranger has a rational motive for killing him. The victim is the principal witness to the crime. By eliminating the victim, you eliminate the principal witness.

The decision to escalate a robbery into a murder is sometimes calculated, often impulsive. Amateur criminals are the most susceptible. A young hoodlum hijacks a car and rides around the neighborhood for half an hour trying to find a way to ditch the car's owner. He really only wants the car, but he

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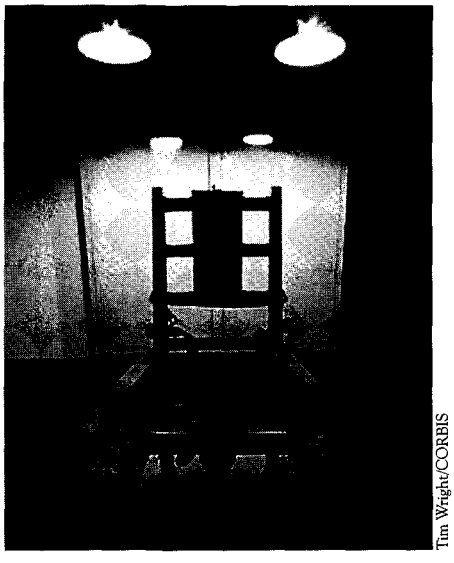
soon realizes this person has had a long, long look at him. What other way out is there than to murder the victim? The "surprised burglar" is another common scenario. A teenager breaks into a neighbor's house and suddenly the person comes home. The kid only wants jewelry, but the neighbor knows him by sight. There isn't any chance that he isn't going to "tell." Murder is the only alternative. And in the case of a parolee or prior offender facing long years in prison, a few more years tacked on won't make much difference. Much better to chance escaping altogether. Murder is the rational choice.

For centuries, the purpose of the death penalty has been to draw a clear, bright line between felony robbery or rape and felony murder. Rape or rob and you will get a long sentence in jail. But escalate the crime into murder and the punishment becomes *qualitatively* different: You forfeit your life.

Well, actually, it didn't always work that well. Overzealous use of the death penalty clouded the issue. Hanging people for picking pockets produced unwanted incentives in the pickpockets. From the Enlightenment on, reformers pointed this out. "It is a great abuse among us to condemn to the same punishment a person who only robs on the highway and another who robs and murders," wrote Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). "In China, those who add murder to robbery are cut in pieces: but not so the others; to this difference it is owing that though they rob in that country they never murder. In Russia, where the punishment for robbery and murder is the same, they always murder. The dead, they say, tell no tales."


Tim Wright/CORBIS

Nineteenth-century reforms brought a halt to this mistaken practice (except in the American South). A clear line was drawn between robbery and murder. The last execution in New York State took place in 1963. In the chair was a two-bit criminal who had stuck up a bar in East Harlem. When one woman didn't hand over her wallet fast enough, he put a bullet through her forehead. His execution was a clear and precise application of capital punishment. Did it work? The statistical record clearly indicates that it did.

The swift and certain application of the death penalty throughout the early years of the century brought murder into a steady decline. The peak in homicides occurred in the 1930s—generally associated with Prohibition. Executions also peaked across the country in 1935 at 200 (roughly four per state). After that point, the murder rate dropped steadily. As homicides fell, the number of executions followed them down. By the early 1960s, capital punishment was applied only in a few well-publicized cases. Still, the concept of "going to the chair" was fixed clearly in everyone's mind. By 1963, the murder rate was triumphantly low.

Then a fatal miscalculation occurred. Convinced that the problem of felony murder had been solved forever and that it was now "barbaric" to continue executions, liberals mounted a campaign to abolish capital punishment. By 1966 there was a de facto moratorium in nearly all states, and in 1971 the Supreme Court overturned all existing death-penalty laws. But at *zero* executions, the predictable happened. Beginning in 1966, the rate of murder skyrocketed, soaring by 1980 to more than double the 1963 rate. Moreover, this was not just a broad, general rise in murder. "Crimes of passion" stayed virtually the same. Almost the entire increase was the result of an explosion of felony murder.

Proving cause and effect in broad social trends is virtually impossible, and I will not try to make the case that the rejection of capital punishment was the *sole* cause of the upsurge in felony murders after 1966. There were many factors at work—urban riots, the broad acceptance of drugs, the general embrace of social disorder. After all, it was the Sixties. But put it this way: If the common social expectation of capital punishment indeed deterred hundreds and thousands of felony murders, and if its removal could be expected to unleash a hitherto suppressed torrent of fatal confrontations, the figures wouldn't look any different than they do in the historical record.

In 1963, *90 percent* of murders were "crimes of passion." In fact, one of the major arguments of death-penalty abolitionists was that murder had *become* a "crime of passion." Therefore the death penalty was "barbaric." In typical liberal fashion, the abolitionists failed to see the vast number of crimes that were being deterred by the death penalty. Once it was abolished, the furies were unleashed.

More than half of all murders are now "stranger murders"—probably the most significant social trend in the last 35 years. Fewer than half these crimes are ever solved, proving beyond any doubt that killing your victim has calculated advantages. Old-time police officers recognize the difference. "I patrolled Flatbush Avenue in the 1950s, and at least half the time when we stopped an armed robbery, the gun turned out to be unloaded," says John Coughlin, a retired New York City cop who campaigns for the death penalty. "The criminals wanted the *fear* of the gun, but they didn't want even the slightest possibility that the gun might accidentally go off. That meant 'going to the chair.'" Willie Sutton, the most notorious bank robber of the era, prided himself in never harming any of his victims. He had good reason.

Today, murder-in-the-course-of-a-crime has become almost routine. "Leaving no witnesses" is an articulated policy. Homicide is now the number-one cause of *occupational* death for women and number two (behind vehicular accidents) for men. The highest rate of victimization is among cab and livery drivers, convenience-store workers, gas-station attendants, and bodega owners—people who face the public in commercial settings with little or no protection. The one ray of hope has been in the recent rise of executions. Publicizing of the death penalty seems to be penetrating the criminal mind. As executions have risen steeply in the mid 1990s, the murder rate has dropped precipitously. We are at least back to a level of 1969—still more than double the days

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when the death penalty was routinely enforced, but well below the peak of the execution-free 1980s.

In light of this national epidemic, it is difficult to fathom why reporters and editorialists spend so much time wringing their hands over the remote possibility that somehow, somewhere an innocent person may be executed by the state. (In fact, the vast majority of overturned capital cases involve procedural technicalities and do not seriously challenge the guilt of the offender.) Still the critics persist.

In a recent dismissal of capital punishment, even in the most egregious cases, columnist Richard Cohen wrote: "The dead cannot be helped." Retrospectively, the thousands who died over the last 30 years for lack of a death penalty certainly cannot be helped. But prospectively?

Mr. Tucker, a veteran journalist, is CEO of theelevator.com, a matchmaking service for entrepreneurs and investors.

Beyond the 'Humanly Tolerable'

PETER L. BERGER

FOR a long time, it has seemed that conservatives are as mindlessly enamored of the hangman as liberals are of the abortionist. Given recent developments, however, we may now see a break in at least the former affinity. It would be salutary if George W. Bush, the champion of "compassionate conservatism" and the official in charge of the busiest assembly line of executions in the nation, were embarrassed by the sordid details that have come out of Texas. Perhaps he might even be induced to add a modest disclaimer to his bland assertion of confidence that no innocent person has ever been executed on his watch.

The evidence is rapidly mounting of the likelihood that innocent people have indeed been executed all along. And, as Carl M. Cannon said in the recent NATIONAL REVIEW, conservatives should not be surprised by this, since the judicial system, after all, is a branch of government: Conservatives have a supremely validated suspicion about government in all of its branches. It is almost an instinct of conservatives to distrust the wisdom of government, and therefore to limit its powers; surely this distrust should extend to this ultimate power over life and death.

To limit the power of government to take life should be a *conservative* principle—and never mind if Jesse Jackson happens to agree with it. Cannon might have added that a large body of evidence suggests that the death penalty fails to deter, giving this particular exercise of governmental power a distinctively gratuitous character.

Opposition to the death penalty, in the United States as elsewhere, does in fact correlate with other liberal positions. One need have no sympathy with these other positions to agree on the death penalty, and one also need not agree with all the reasons given by liberals for their opposition. Clarence Darrow was an admirable character, but his famous defense of Leopold and Loeb was a masterpiece of mushy thinking: What he essentially said was that we are all animals determined by the laws of evolution—and *therefore* these two murderers should not be executed. The evolutionary maxim concerning the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence seems to have escaped him (I would actually argue that Darrow was moved by compassion *despite* his rather silly philosophy). It is especially important to state that opposition to the death penalty is not necessarily linked to other "soft" attitudes toward crime (such as the notion that criminals are victims of society or that the judicial system should be a therapeutic institution). Opposition to the death penalty, I contend, should be based on much deeper grounds: *on the perception that there are acts of cruelty that put in question our very humanity.*

It is fair to assume that the overwhelming majority of Americans today are opposed to torture as a form of punishment. *Why?* It was, after all, a routine practice for much of history and, alas, is still routine in many countries today. One can imagine a social-scientific study showing that the prospect of torture would serve as an effective deterrent. One could also imagine certain judicial procedures to safeguard the innocent. I think (or, perhaps, as a pessimistic conservative, I should say that I hope) that the majority would *still* oppose torture, for the simple but crucial reason that this is a practice that offends our basic understanding of what is humanly tolerable. Of course, there are extreme cases that would put this understanding under pressure, as in the case of a captured terrorist who knows where an atomic bomb has been placed to go off. But here is another sound conservative principle—that good law must not be based on extreme cases.

And here is the critical insight relevant to this debate: The death penalty *is* an exercise of torture, superficially sanitized by the quasi-medical method of execution now prevalent in this country. It is an act of unutterable cruelty to hold an individual in prison and to inform him that he will be put to death on a specified date. To perceive the death penalty in this light is not the result of a philosophical or empirical argument. Rather, it is a primordial perception of the limits of what is humanly permissible. This perception, historically rooted in the Jewish and Christian view of the human condition, took a long time to mature and to be disseminated among significant numbers of people. An analogous case is the slow maturation of the perception that slavery is humanly intolerable. Slavery, torture, and the death penalty share this quality of an act that demeans those who inflict it as it degrades and torments those subjected to it. No civilized society should institutionalize such acts.

In the matter of the death penalty, the United States today stands virtually alone among democracies, in the company of a repulsive collection of tyrannies. It is no wonder that American preachments about human rights are treated with derision by many, especially in Europe and Latin America, who share American democratic values. Perhaps—and I say so with minimal optimism—the current debate over the death penalty will lead to a situation that will allow Americans to find other areas in which to affirm their exceptionalism.

Mr. Berger is director of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University. His most recent book is *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience.*

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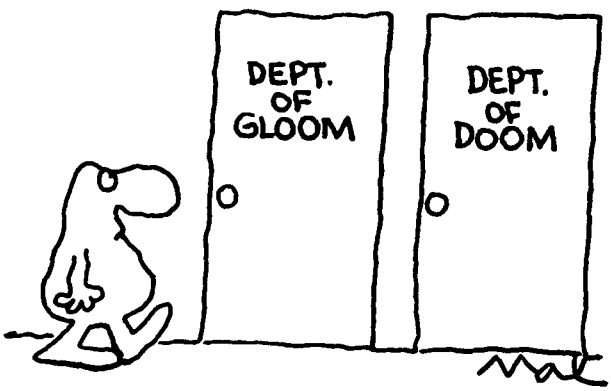

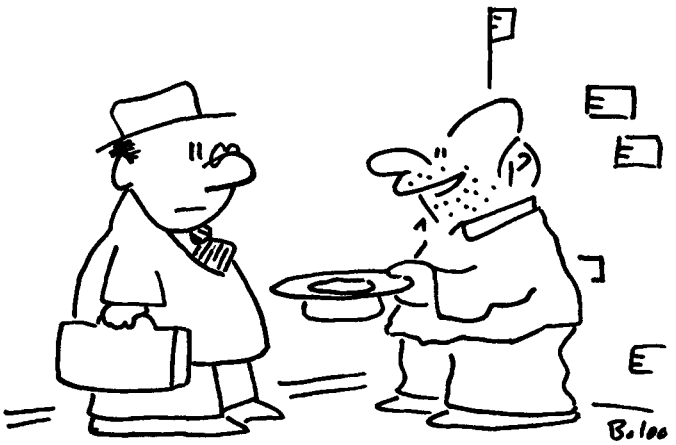

"No, thanks, Mister—I had a job once, and you wouldn't believe how much they took out for taxes."

"YOU'RE THE ONLY STAND ON THE BLOCK? I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAVE TO BREAK YOU UP!"

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The Church of Wills

ROBERT ROYAL

Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit, by Garry Wills (Doubleday, 328 pp., $25)

EZRA POUND once said of the Catholic Church that an institution that could survive the picturesqueness of the Borgias possessed a certain native resilience. Garry Wills is not in the same league as the Borgias, though not for want of trying. In *Papal Sin* he seeks to discredit virtually every distinctive feature of Catholicism, while claiming merely to be setting the record straight on the errors and "structures of deceit" that have grown up around the Vatican in recent decades. But there is reason to doubt this. Wills's properly purified Catholicism—theological dogma aside—perfectly coincides with modern American liberalism. It is hard not to think that this unlikely harmony reflects a certain dogmatism of its own.

Wills is a gifted and remarkably productive writer. After brilliant graduate work in classics at Yale, he began writing for this magazine. But in the late 1960s, under the influence of the civil-rights and antiwar movements (particularly the Berrigans), his conservatism underwent a reversal. Now a professor at Northwestern, he often appears in *The New York Review of Books* and has received prizes, including a Pulitzer, for vigorous volumes on a variety of political and cultural subjects. Just last year, he published a deftly written brief biography of St. Augustine.

Mr. Royal is president of the Faith & Reason Institute and author most recently of *The Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century: A Comprehensive World History.*

Garry Wills by Roman Genn

In the present work, however, Wills's anger at both Catholicism and conservatism often overcomes his learning. Strong pages on New Testament scholarship, Augustine, and 19th-century Catholic history are tacked on to relentless liberal polemics. Wills claims Augustine, Acton, and Newman as his heroes, but it is doubtful those strict Christians would return any such compliment. Meanwhile, scholars and church figures who disagree with Wills's tendentious positions on a score of complicated questions are not simply declared wrong, they are explicitly called liars. It's no wonder that liberal-pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty has expressed agreement with Wills and wondered why Wills is still a Catholic.

The author's argument unfolds in three main phases. First, he tries to show that the Church has lied about its treatment of Jews and its supposed silence during the Holocaust. Implying that an institution that would lie about that will lie about anything, he then turns to alleged doctrinal dishonesties internal to Catholicism. Finally, he claims that Truth itself explodes the truth-claims and authority of the Church as it currently understands itself. A logician might notice that these three subjects are not strictly linked (Catholic leaders might, say, misconstrue anti-Semitism in the Church in the past century yet still be right about the proper understanding of the New Testament). But to Wills, alleged Catholic anti-Semitism stems from the same spirit of untruth as the Vatican's denial of ordination to women, its mandatory priestly celibacy, its "homophobia," its allegedly obsessive concern with life in the womb, and its belief in papal infallibility.

The problem with this thesis is its own failure to tell the whole truth. Wills largely accepts John Cornwell's dubious claim that Pius XII was "Hitler's Pope." Putting anti-anti-Communism to new uses, Wills believes that the greater Soviet threat led Pius to be silent about Nazi genocide, and that his successors have been forced to defend him. Whatever historians may eventually determine about the many actors—Pope, governments, Jewish groups themselves—who could have done more for European Jews, at the time Pius seemed outspoken to some observers. The *New York Times* editorialized about the Pope's "lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent" in the 1940s; today, the *Times* editors, forgetful of their predecessors, claim he was "shamefully silent." Einstein wrote to the paper in 1941 that he had never been interested in the Church until it alone began speaking in defense of European Jews. The chief rabbi of Rome effusively praised the Pope for helping save his people and later converted to Catholicism, taking Pius's given name, Eugenio. (His wife also converted, taking the name Eugenia.) What Wills dogmatically declares to be a flagrant instance of characteristic lying may in fact be an attempt to open current opinion to fuller truth.

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"A Feast Fit for a Glutton."

—Norman Podhoretz

...opens this ...with a brutally ...of his speak- ...he even more ...that follow. ...antage ...else who ...this. It is ...without ...That

—Michael Kinsley

...here, Bill ...-olds on ...to enjoy your- ...key to Buckley's ...this book ...from pre- ...as novelist, ...speaker he ...he derives ...pleasure is ...this exhila-

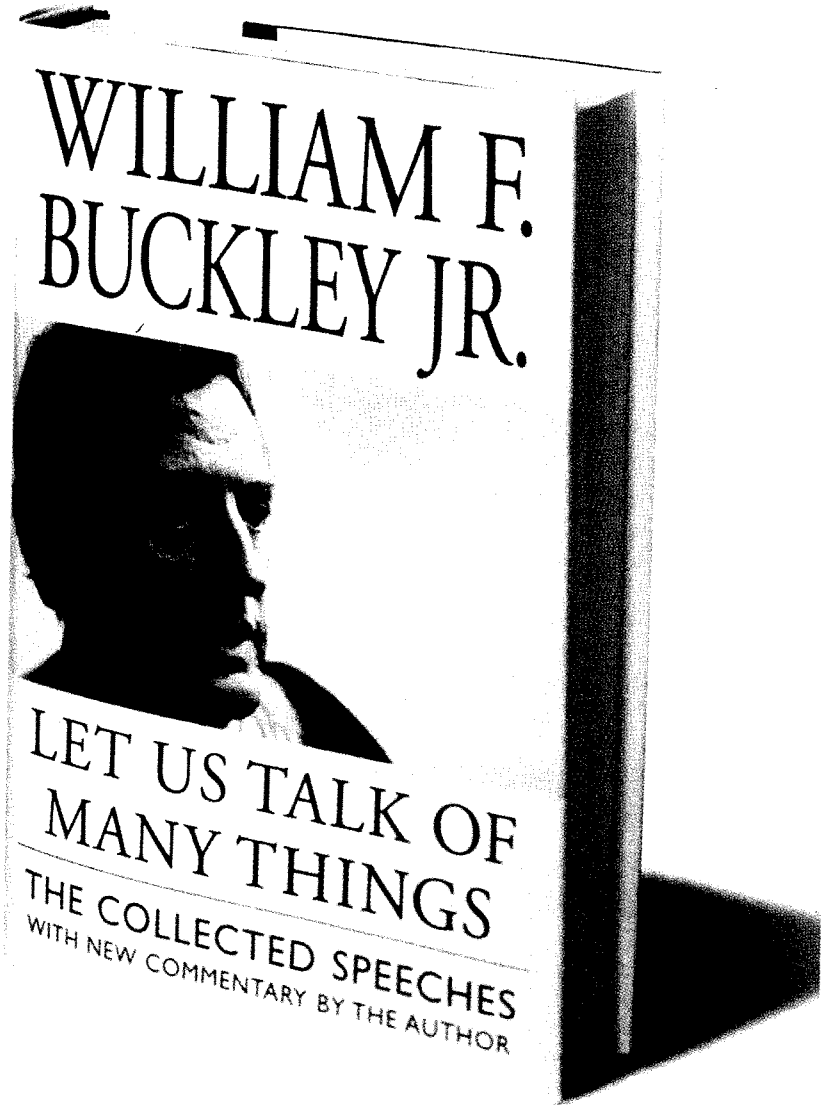
—Andrew Ferguson

...this book ...thought- ...a ...sense of a ...entertaining the ...the ...our society, ...world. Bill ...enduring ...intri-

—David Brudnoy

...nishing: ...read ...completely, ...every sin-

—Peter Robinson



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Wills's views put him in strange company. He claims that the canonization of figures like the Polish saint Maximilian Kolbe, who died at Auschwitz, is an unsavory attempt to "usurp" the Holocaust. But it takes willful naïveté to believe, as Wills does, that the Nazis arrested people like Kolbe for purely political, not religious reasons.

Kolbe's Catholicism was undoubtedly a factor. Thousands of Catholics and Protestants were threatened and then arrested by the Nazis; thousands of priests wound up in Dachau and many others were forced into labor camps. Mussolini convinced Hitler that it was a bad idea to take on the Church directly: Such persecution usually winds up destroying the persecutors and strengthening the Church. So even as they rounded up thousands of priests and lay people who were later martyred in various ways, the Nazis always claimed that they were moving only against their political enemies. In private, though, Hitler spoke of crushing the Catholic Church "like a toad."

Wills ignores all this because he wants to use the Holocaust as a springboard to further arguments against the Church. In fact, a great deal of the truth remains to be told about the ways Christians were persecuted under Nazism. Recovering that truth in no way "usurps" the Holocaust, nor does it make unseemly claims of Christian victimhood. Rather, it would remind us of what Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg argued openly: Nazis had to oppose so-called negative Christianity precisely because they thought the "political Jew Paul" had made it into an instrument for turning the Aryan race into Semites.

Since Wills is quite capable of simplifying recent history to fit a thesis, it is no surprise when he does the same with the more distant Christian tradition. On issue after issue, he pieces together interpretations from recent secular and Biblical scholarship, which cumulatively—and miraculously—reveal that the ancient Mediterranean provided us with a creed remarkably similar to the most recent Democratic party platform.

Take sexuality. Christianity radically altered the sexual ethos of the ancient world, crowding out male-male eroticism and raising the status of women and girls, who were often victims of infanticide. This was one reason many women became Christian. In step with modern feminism, Wills only notices the growth of "the great Christian lie about women." On homosexuality, even the most ingenious modern scholars cannot entirely get around certain Biblical texts. So Wills is forced to make weak arguments that the "abomination" in Leviticus 18:22 is outmoded ritualism, and that Romans 1:27 might actually condemn pederasty instead of what it says literally ("men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error").

Wills takes a similar tack on abortion. There may be nothing in the New Testament about it, but neither does Wills go out of his way to remind anyone that very early Christian documents like the *Didache* condemn it. There is a presumption in Scripture, and in most human societies, against taking human life. Augustine and Aquinas, Wills contends, are uncertain of when "ensoulment" occurs and a full human being is present. Many modern Christians may be equally uncertain yet decide that respect for life means we should err on the side of life, just as we don't shoot into a thicket until we're sure a deer, rather than a person, is there. But Wills and those who agree with him take this uncertainty as permission to abort without limit. There is a brief nod to respect for life: "Though the fetus may not be a person, it is human life, it has the potential to become a person. It is something that should not lightly be done away with or deprived of respect." In the end, though, it seems that this principle would pose no serious obstacle to any abortion among the 1.3 million peformed in America annually.

On internal Church matters, too, Wills seems to think himself more authoritative than the Pope and the Christian tradition. Thus, women should be allowed to be priests, even though Wills thinks the Catholic notion that priests transform bread and wine at the consecration is magical nonsense. Wills assures us that "the Pope [i.e., John Paul II, a Polish authoritarian] has made the number of priests dwindle sharply by insisting on celibacy." Since, according to Wills, priests are living a sexual lie in large numbers and are gay in increasing percentages, they should be allowed to marry. But whatever the explanation for the recent crisis of vocations in developed nations, celibacy cannot be the only reason. The same discipline was in place in 1950, when there was no vocation crisis, to say nothing of 1850 or 1450. And John Paul has stimulated a modest increase in vocations.

So we have Garry Wills calling us to a True Church that has never existed, Catholic or Protestant, and we might ask why he bothers. Perhaps he imagines that, like a modern Luther, he will spark a new Reformation. But the churches that have liberalized the most have experienced the sharpest decline in numbers, while the ranks of evangelicals and Catholics are growing. The latter two groups will surely not be reading this book, and anyone who already agrees with Wills will not need to. Though Wills claims to be describing a church of love, not rigid dogma, he scorns those who disagree with him. And his truth-claims ride roughshod over a lot of inconvenient truths. It is unfortunate that someone with Wills's gifts should have yielded to this exercise in hubris. **NR**

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Exotic Delights

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

A Middle East Mosaic: Fragments of Life, Letters, and History, by Bernard Lewis (Random, 469 pp., $35)

At the opening of the Ottoman parliament in 1908, the newsman Francis McCullagh looked around the square of Saint Sophia, filled with "Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, mariners from the Isles, shepherds from Asia Minor, Arabs from the Holy Cities and the mysterious Peninsula, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Mongols, Turkomans, Tartars, Kirghiz, Aryans, Kurds, Kutzovalaks, Jews, Gypsies, Caucasians, Druses, Maronites, and representatives of all the other races which make up this most composite empire." McCullagh was on the verge of snickering at this motley mob, when it occurred to him that he should be humbled by it. "This, after all, is no mean assembly," he wrote. "It contains representatives from Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Mecca, from the races which have given us the Talmud, the Bible, and the Koran, from the tribes which founded Judaism, Christianity, and Islam . . ."

One of the great strengths of Bernard Lewis's anthology is that it reminds us that the Middle East is still such a place. Oddly, we need the reminding. In the early 20th century, the region spurred the imagination of adventurers like T. E. Lawrence and writers like Wilfred Thesiger, Peter Fleming, and Patrick Leigh Fermor, who set out in droves to discover it. In the early 21st, few other than specialists even keep up with it in the daily newspapers, and rare is the person who can tell a wali from a wadi, or a pasha from a parshat.

The Princeton historian Lewis is perhaps the only man who could pull off such a sweeping reintroduction. His *Middle East Mosaic* gathers two millennia's worth of snippets on every conceivable subject from both Middle Easterners and Western observers. The passages range from medieval Turkish love poetry to Henry Kissinger's memoirs, from the rabbinical wisdom of Pirqe Avot ("Love work and hate lordship") to an attack on feminized Western woman ("she has become no less than a bitch, chased by a dozen dogs in heat") from www.taleban.com. Lewis links these selections with short and elegant introductory essays.

He is firmly grounded in the major languages and literatures of the region: Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, and Persian. So we learn that sepoys in British India and spahis in French North Africa take their names from the same Persian root for "cavalryman"; that we have an Arabic word for spirits (alcohol), while Arab countries have a European word for alcohol (sbirto); that Reza Shah decided to rename Persia Iran (which is cognate with Aryan) only in 1936, after a lecture from Nazi finance minister Hjalmar Schacht.

Many of the best passages in this book are accounts of Western visits. Gustave Flaubert delights in the company of nomadic slave traders as much as he deplores the company of Western bourgeois, while Friedrich Engels prefers the bourgeois, calling Bedouins "a nation of robbers." Dean Acheson describes Mosadeq with his "two bright, shoe-button eyes." Mark Twain, perhaps the ugliest American to appear in these pages, remorselessly describes trying to loot an archeological site:

> We brought not a relic from Ephesus! After gathering up fragments of sculptured marbles and breaking ornaments from the interior work of the Mosques; and after bringing them at a cost of infinite trouble and fatigue, five miles on muleback to the railway depot, a government officer compelled all who had such things to disgorge!

Lewis's great gift as an anthologist is his delight in exoticism—even in an age such as ours, in which the whole idea of the exotic has been discredited as politically incorrect. The peoples of the Middle East are interesting because they're *different*: theocratic, misogynistic, polygamous, and probably more bigoted. Perhaps the most consistent shock to Western visitors in the Middle East has been the region's relative unconcern with equality. Ibn Qutayba, who collected the sayings of Muslim rulers in the early Middle Ages, quotes the following maxim of Anushirwan: "Govern the best of the people by love; mingle desire and fear for the common people; and govern the lowest by terror."

Likewise, Middle Eastern justice has astonished Westerners down the years with its arbitrariness and brutality. Adulterous women used to be thrown into the Bosporus in sacks. Men who violated the fast during Ramadan were forced to drink molten lead. Merchants were beheaded for using false weights, and bankers for collecting interest, which is illegal under Koranic law. Thieves were subject to "guanching"—

Lewis's great gift as an anthologist is his delight in exoticism—even in an age in which the whole idea of the exotic has been discredited as politically incorrect.

heaving a man with his limbs bound behind him onto a stake, so he can take a day or two to die. (In modern Iran and Afghanistan, they get buried under rubble dumped by a Caterpillar tractor.)

The Middle East shows more political continuities than the West. Thus Lewis notes that, while medieval Christian Crusades were launched in imitation of Islamic jihads, the most important difference between the words "jihad" and "crusade" today is that the latter is never used in its original non-metaphorical sense. He also contrasts the Crusades' military successes and their religious failure. Middle Easterners viewed the Crusaders as an invading army. Period. They had an almost total lack of interest in the principles and values the Crusaders professed to be crusading about. "Terrorism" is hardly new, either, as Lewis shows by including accounts of the 11th-century "Assassins," ur-terrorists at the beck and call of the Persian holy man Hasan-i Sabbah.

Mr. Caldwell is senior writer at *The Weekly Standard* and a columnist for *New York Press*.

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Nor is the current state of Israel such a radical departure. Jews outnumbered Muslims in Jerusalem even under Muslim rule. What is striking are the shifts in Israel's backers. A 19th-century shah, arguing with a wealthy Jewish acquaintance in Paris about the condition of the Jews in Persia, sounds like a proto-Zionist when he says: "I consider the best thing to do would be that you should pay 50 crores to some large or small State, and buy a territory in which you could collect all the Jews of the whole world . . ." (He adds, "We laughed heartily, and he made no reply.") During the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Prince Faisal is gushing in his praise to Felix Frankfurter ("We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement"). And Anwar Sadat's account of El Alamein, the first decisive Allied victory of World War II, in which he promises Rommel to raise an army to back the Nazis, shows just how unlikely he was to be the first Arab leader to reach a peace agreement with Israel.

In Machiavelli's time, the Islamic state was an alternative; by Burke's, it was a ball and chain.

Arabs were shocked by European "licentiousness," particularly in matters of liquor. (The Turks called their European possessions "Romeili"—the Land of Rum.) But in nothing are Westerners so barbaric as the way they treat their women. The Turkish ambassador complains in 1720 that in Paris "it is the women who sit in the shops and haggle and bargain and deal." An Egyptian sheik in Paris a century later notes that Frenchmen "are the slaves of women and subject to their commands whether they be beautiful or not." Muslim natives were always discomfited to see Western women traveling alone, but such women had a great advantage over male correspondents: They could be admitted to the closed world of harems.

Islamic law permits four wives, unlimited mistresses, and divorce on demand. Surprising to feminist ears will be Lewis's assessment that women visitors formed, "in general, a more positive picture of a woman's life in the East" than men did. Some Europeans even found a silver lining in the prevalence of slavery. The 19th-century British diplomat Sir Charles Eliot remarks that the Muslim world has always been marked by a high incidence of slavery (including sex slavery) but a low one of prostitution, and a high incidence of begging but a low one of indigence.

In Machiavelli's time, the Islamic state was an alternative; by Burke's, it was a ball and chain. Today it seems like an anachronism—but it *seems* more of an anachronism than it actually is, thinks Lewis, who views Islamic theocracy (of the Ayatollah Khomeini's sort) and secular democracy (of Kemal Atatürk's sort) as "the two most likely alternative futures for the peoples of the Middle East." The great sadness of Middle Eastern history over the past few centuries has been Islam's slow-dawning realization that Western Christendom—those doughfaced boozers, those henpecked half-wits, those inelegant infidels—somehow left Islamic culture behind. Figuring out why this happened preoccupies at least a dozen of the Europeans and Middle Easterners whose writings Lewis has collected.

Tocqueville noted that "Muhammad brought down from heaven and placed in the [Koran] not only religious doctrines but also political maxims, civil and criminal laws, and scientific theories." No secular institutions developed, leaving Islam a religion that "could not long dominate in times of enlightenment." Lewis at times seems sympathetic to this viewpoint, noting in one of his introductory essays that "the Prophet Muhammad was, so to speak, his own Constantine." But he never allows us to close our minds to Islam's historical record of holding a variety of cultures together, or to dismiss the enduring appeal of Islam itself. After all, he writes, "the Islamic culture of the Middle East was the first that was truly international, intercultural, interracial, in a sense, even intercontinental, and its contribution—both direct and indirect—to the modern world is immense." **NR**

■ FILM ■

Gibson's Revolution

JONAH GOLDBERG

WHEN Mel Gibson came out with *Braveheart* in 1995, some conservatives felt that Hollywood had finally made a movie just for them. The film celebrated a definition of liberty strictly at odds with the popular definition. Liberty as defined by Hollywood means the ability of an individual to do whatever floats his boat without being judged or interfered with. But when William Wallace made his defiant and exhilarating cry for "Freedom!" at the end of the film (while being literally disemboweled), he was referring not to individual liberty but to the right of self-governing communities to be left alone by outside authorities.

Many of us hoped that Gibson's new movie, ***The Patriot***, would do for America what *Braveheart* did for Scotland. Written by Robert Rodat, who penned *Saving Private Ryan*, and directed by Roland Emmerich, the director of *Independence Day*, *The Patriot* promised to be the sort of film that would find Pat Buchanan camping out in his sleeping bag to get a choice seat. But while the film is enjoyable, its virtues as a conservative battle cry are disappointingly ambiguous.

The Patriot tells the story of Benjamin Martin (Gibson), a South Carolina widower and plantation owner content to spend his days taking care of his seven children and constructing a rocking chair in his spare time. A legendary veteran of the French and Indian wars, and author of no small number of atrocities in the old days, Martin is today a mature American patriot who believes that independence from Britain is the right course. But as this can be achieved only through a bloody war fought "among our homes"—thus putting his

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).

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family at risk—he will have no part of it.

Predictably, his oldest son is as headstrong as his father once was and is determined to fight for truth, justice, and what he hopes will become the American way. Father and son argue at length, but what finally settles it for the Gibson character is the remorseless cruelty of the British, especially in the form of Col. William Tavington, played perfectly by Jason Isaacs. (It is a tragedy that Hollywood could never produce a single Communist character as thoroughly rotten as Tavington, but that's another story.) Tavington is a loose cannon in Gen. Cornwallis's arsenal, and his effective but shortsighted tactics rouse the anger of the populace. Under Tavington, the British kill American prisoners, American wounded, American slaves, American children. Eventually they drag Martin into the fight, and they are much the sorrier for it. He is an adept backwoods warrior, hiding his militia in the swamps and employing unconventional methods against the rigid British. He quickly earns the name "The Ghost" for his ability to harass the Redcoat columns and then vanish.

One of the few almost-subtle themes of *The Patriot* is the "Don't Tread on Me" style of warfare of the revolutionaries—perhaps the first victory of a loosely organized, largely agricultural people over a world-spanning empire. Gen. Cornwallis, enjoyably played by Tom Wilkinson, is a gentleman-soldier who cannot fathom why the Americans would break the long-established rules of war just to protect their homes. All of this plays out against a lush historical backdrop and the most fighting-while-running-through-woods since *Last of the Mohicans*. America wins in the end, the new world is born, and the torch of liberty has been lit.

What conservatives should especially appreciate is that in many respects the film is unapologetically out of step with today's Hollywood. There are some G-rated kissing jokes, but nothing that would jeopardize a two-thumbs-up from the Family Research Council. When Martin's son spends the night in his girlfriend's home, he is first sewn up head-to-toe in a gunnysack—call it the first full-body condom. This unusual modesty reflects both Gibson's own staunchly Catholic sensibilities (he, like Benjamin Martin, has seven kids) and a desire to pack the theater with families—not exactly a revolution against Hollywood's liberal mores, but refreshing nonetheless. Indeed, while it may be technologically more lavish than previous films about the period—its battle scenes are far more realistic—*The Patriot*, in dialogue, plot, and themes, is a throwback to the days when Hollywood made movies where America's moral superiority was never in doubt.

This point has not been lost on the British press, which is livid about the film. One headline blares, "HOLLYWOOD'S RACIST LIES ABOUT BRITAIN AND THE BRITISH." This sensitivity is not altogether misplaced: The British have long been unfairly characterized as villains by Hollywood, and Gibson's recent films display a distinctly anti-British bias. (*Braveheart* was far from a love letter to Britannia's restraint and virtue.)

■

The Patriot honors what is to the Left that great moment of original sin: the American Founding.

■

But it is really American anti-Americans who must feel the most aggrieved, because the film honors what is to the Left that great moment of original sin: the American Founding. *The Patriot*'s heroes are the very dead white males who have lately been purged from so much of the historical record. The American patriots in this film are decent and likeable and have the courage of their convictions. Racism is not the North Star of their existence, and greed is not the dominant theme of their lives. In other words, *The Patriot* propounds a view of the American Revolution not found in most college syllabuses.

Not surprisingly, the film has already become a political flashpoint. A preview audience in L.A. was reportedly horrified by the depiction of Martin's young boys shooting and killing British soldiers ("Aim for the officers," is Dad's advice). Surely, muttered many a Hollywood liberal, a scene like this should have been avoided in the wake of Columbine. But Gibson defended the scene, saying he took his own kids shooting. And reports of Hollywood's dismay brought Second Amendment partisans to Gibson's side even before the movie opened. "I highly recommend this movie to any and all conservatives," wrote Nicholas Sanchez, a columnist for the Free Congress Foundation. "No, I have not yet seen it. But from what I have read, it is already upsetting people that need to be upset."

Nevertheless the film falls short of a full-throated defense of the American patriots as they actually were. This is most clearly revealed in its patently anachronistic treatment of blacks. A major subplot involves a slave named Occam, who has been signed over to Martin's militia. At first he fights because he has no choice; then because he learns he will be freed if he serves twelve months; and finally because he believes in the cause. Martin's oldest son convinces Occam that once the hated British are removed, America will live up to its New World promise and become a land of liberty where blacks and whites will live in harmony. The anachronism is palpable for everyone in the audience: Considerations about civil liberty for blacks, especially in South Carolina, are about 19 decades premature.

The charge of moral hypocrisy on race has been the main point in the Left's indictment of the Founding. It even divides many conservatives in debates about the meaning of the Declaration of Independence. *The Patriot* handles this delicate problem by trying to take it off the table. Thus the British (who banned slavery and fought the slave trade long before we did) are more cruel to blacks in Gibson's film than the Americans are. Not only that, Benjamin Martin himself doesn't own any slaves. His South Carolina plantation is worked by free black men who make an honest living and are grateful for it. At movie's end, Occam and Martin's black workers return to the razed plantation to commence building "the new world"—starting with Martin's plantation house. Thus the political motives of the War of Independence are blurred with those of the Civil War.

Race is also the reason the *Braveheart* theory of freedom cannot be found in *The Patriot*. Martin does not fight for principle or country—at least not at

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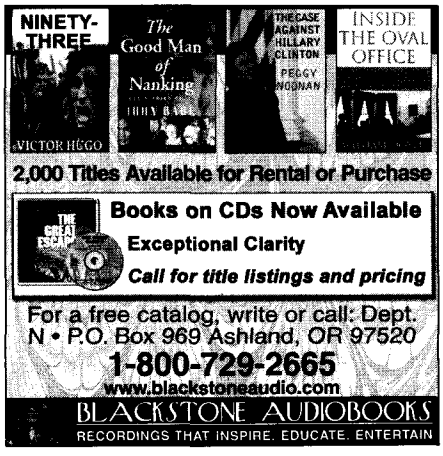
first—but for vengeance. The relevant political institution is not South Carolina, but the family. This seems like a pretty serious cop-out for a film called "The Patriot."

The Patriot was originally intended to be the true story of Francis Marion, the South Carolina militiaman known as "The Swamp Fox." (Marion was the subject of a 1950s Disney TV series, *The Swamp Fox*, starring Leslie Nielson. Theme song: "Swamp Fox, Swamp Fox, tail on his hat! Nobody knows where the Swamp Fox is at!") Alas, the real story of Francis Marion is an unsavory tale of barbarity: Marion relished butchering Indians and raped his female slaves. An unnamed executive at Sony Pictures told the London *Express* that the studio brass "couldn't go ahead once historians gave them chapter and verse on the life of the Swamp Fox." So they changed the hero's name to Benjamin Martin; switched his *nom de guerre* to "The Ghost"; freed his slaves; and used liberal Hollywood's own anachronistic techniques to sugarcoat the pill of libertarian conservatism for modern audiences.

The Patriot is fun to watch, and it will be equally fun to watch the Left hate it. But it is neither the success it could have been nor the success that some conservatives may claim. By making the Founding a personal story of libertarian anti-statism, the film's producers missed the opportunity to affirm that the seeds of true equality were planted in the Revolution. It may be unfortunate that freedom wasn't universal from the outset, but we could use more honest celebration of the fact that the seeds were planted at all. **NR**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■ FILM II ■

Proustitution

JOHN SIMON

SOME popular, even trashy, novels have been made into good movies, infidelities to the original rightly eliciting few tears. But what of the adaptations of great novels, classics or recent masterpieces, including what may be the greatest modern novel, Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, formerly Englished as *Remembrance of Things Past*; now, more properly, as *In Search of Lost Time*?

Many famous directors—though, interestingly, no French ones—have toyed with adapting parts or even all of this *roman fleuve*, with pages running into thousands. But how, without betraying the author, exasperating the experts, and shortchanging the public? I would be for leaving it alone, but perhaps Everest must be climbed because, as they say, it is there.

The first serious attempt was Harold Pinter's scenario for the director Joseph Losey, which grandiosely tried to tackle the entire work and, understandably, never got made. Pinter published it in book form as *The Proust Screenplay* in 1977. In 1984, the vastly overrated German director Volker Schlöndorff made *Swann in Love*, from the first of the seven novels that together constitute *Search*. Except visually, it was poor, with Jeremy Irons as Swann giving a somnambulistic and soporific performance. A short summary of what is good and bad about these attempts can be found in Roger Shattuck's just-published book *Proust's Way*; my concern here is with Raúl Ruiz's ***Time Regained***, a film version of the seventh and last constituent of *Search* that opened here last month.

Ruiz, a prolific Chilean living in Paris, has made 90-odd films, most of which I have avoided. They are slapdash, frivolous, campy—think of a lesser Pedro Almodóvar. Here, however, he has made a more considered, respectable, elaborately produced film from a screenplay by Gilles Taurand and himself, in French and with decent subtitles. That the director is, as Proust was, a homosexual may be counted an advantage. Although the novel deals magisterially with heterosexual relationships, there are also various homosexual ones; a widespread theory holds that the protagonist's mistress, the flighty Albertine, is based on Albert, Proust's chauffeur.

Time Regained, the novel, ties together the many strands and characters of the entire work. The real protagonist is time, and the changes wrought by it in individuals, society, the world. Next in

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Raúl Ruiz's *Time Regained* is a mystery for the uninitiated, and quite a workout even for those who have read the book.

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importance are the profound differences in everyone according to the vantage points of different observers—character is really in the eye of the beholder. Further, the novel is about the role of art as that which captures and bestows permanence on fluid, fleeting life. And about memory, the novelist's chief muse, as Proust's work is largely based on real people and events remembered, then molded, recombined, transmuted.

What a tall—not to say impossible—order for the filmmaker, who here has 165 minutes for Proust's roughly 430 pages chock-full of recapitulation, reinterpretation, and reassessment. So Taurand and Ruiz jump around like springboks from flashback to flashback, fragment the novel into disjunct tesserae reassembled into a near-abstract mosaic, and bring in enigmatic references to the work's earlier installments.

The result is a scrambling, a labyrinth, a mystery for the uninitiated, and quite a workout even for those who have read the book. At my second viewing, this time in a movie house, a few people left after a shorter or longer while, but most persevered, perhaps in the vain hope of clarification in the final reel, which, actually, is the most confusing. It is a grand party and recital at which aging and social upheavals

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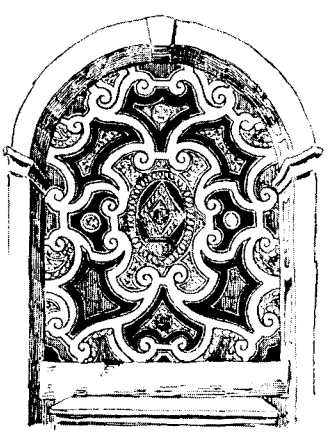
have left everyone altered in appearance and social position, and malicious gossip summarizes everybody's transformations, rises, or falls. For the average moviegoer, totally bewildering.

Missing, of course, is Proust's masterly prose style with its minute observations, philosophic speculations, and epigrammatic pungency, often in page-long architectonic and musical sentences. The cineaste's equivalent is the extended and complex shot, with the peripatetic camera capturing elaborate goings-on without cutting. We get some of this from Ruiz, but without the supreme lucidity of the assured master.

One of the difficulties is the novel's dual point of view: that of the nominal protagonist, the semifictional, semiautobiographical Marcel, who is and isn't Proust, and that of the Narrator, who is. The film tries to tackle this by beginning with Proust in bed in the last phase of his illness (he died in 1922, aged 51), tended by his faithful servant Céleste. His asthmatic breathing permeates the soundtrack as he takes photographs out of a casket, contemplates and identifies them as the chief characters of the story, which takes off from there. Marcel is shown at three different ages and eventually merges with the Narrator, but of course not in that lineal order. The typical moviegoer feels like someone entering a long conversation about unknown people well past the middle.

Worse yet are Ruiz's arrogant, irrelevant, alienating additions to Proust's text, "interludes of pure fantasy, not found anywhere in Proust," as Shattuck puts it. So, for example, near the movie's beginning, the child Marcel enters a vast hall (the film, as usual, is vague about time and place), its floor paved in very large black-and-white tiles on which, symmetrically disposed, lie upturned top hats with white kid gloves partly hanging out of them. Marcel now proceeds toward an adult looking out of a sort of Gothic window at the far end of the hall. The boy sometimes walks, sometimes hops and skips over the hats in a kind of hopscotch. Near film's end, the adult Marcel (or Proust) leaves the party to enter that same hall for the same trajectory, but this time without hopping. What on earth does this mean or contribute?



Cinematic *hommages* may be intended. In wartime Paris, on a wall behind the main action, a projected combat newsreel shows a dying horse, which Shattuck perceives as "an oblique allusion to Buñuel and Dali's film *Un Chien andalou* . . . Ruiz, I infer, wanted to flash his surrealist credentials." Maybe so, but maybe it's also a way of showing how these shallow characters ignored the horrors of war. Maybe, too, *Time Regained*'s ending at the beach "with a walk-out-to-sea sequence" is indeed "lifted from Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*," or, more likely, Visconti's movie version of it. But whatever it is, why?

Ricardo Aronovich has shot the opulent production and costume design with condign lushness. The Narrator is played by an obscure Italian actor, Marcello Mazzarella, who looks like Proust with an elongated jaw, and whose voice is supplied by the well-known director Patrice Chéreau. The notorious Baron de Charlus is John Malkovich, who taped his lines in his bad French; then they were taped, at his speed but correctly, by an obscure French actor with a similar voice imitating Malkovich's; then Malkovich taped them again imitating the French- man. Out of this agglomerate the soundtrack yields a painfully slow-speaking and foreign-sounding Charlus, which, combined with Malkovich's lack of style, emerges absurd. Another problem is the French actress Arielle Dombasle, totally unconvincing as an American.

Catherine Deneuve as Odette, Emmanuelle Béart as Gilberte, Vincent Pérez as Morel, Marie-France Pisier as Mme Verdurin, and most others are fine; only Pascal Greggory falls short—he is not aristocratic enough for Saint-Loup. Jorge Arriagada's music is good, even when, as required, itimitates Fauré. If only the movie's overall imitatio n of Proust were more convincing! **NR**

■ THEATER ■

With Jesus in Bavaria

LINDA BRIDGES

EVERY ten years a small town in Bavaria girds—almost literally—its loins and puts on a play. Which would be of no interest to anyone as far away as Munich or Salzburg, let alone Peoria or Kyoto, except that the play is the Passion of Jesus Christ, and it has been drawing visitors to Oberammergau for a century and a half.

The custom began more than 350 years ago. Germany had already suffered through 15 years of the Thirty Years War, and then, in 1633, a plague broke out. When it hit Oberammergau, we are told, the town fathers gathered in the churchyard and vowed to perform a Passion play every ten years forevermore if the town was spared further deaths. As the legend has it, no one in Oberammergau died of the plague after that day.

The play was first performed the following year; eventually the date shifted to the end of the decade. At first, only one performance was given each decade, but as word of the play spread in the 19th century extra performances were added; the season now runs from May to October. There have been a handful of extra seasons, but only twice has the play not been performed at all: in 1770, because the Church in Bavaria had banned all Passion plays, and in 1940.

Ever since the 1960s there have been calls to lay Oberammergau's Passion Play to rest, for reasons precisely connected with 1940. Jewish groups protested that the play was an affront and an incitement to anti-Semitism, and Rome wondered if it was in tune with post–Vatican II teaching. It didn't help that Der Führer had attempted to co-opt the play as an expression of German nationalism.

Although many Oberammergauers were angered by the Jews' complaints—

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as James Shapiro recounts in his excellent new book, *Oberammergau: The Troubling Story of the World's Most Famous Passion Play*—the village corporately remained calm and did a careful re-examination. Apparently, in older versions of the play (which has undergone major revisions twice, and minor to medium revisions each season), there was a sharp distinction between Jesus and his followers on the one hand, and "the Jews" on the other. And the Jewish leaders in the play were motivated not by concern for their people, or even for their own position, but by sheer evil. By 1990 (the first version of the play I saw), this had been substantially reformed. By this year, even the (non-Scriptural) solicitation of Judas's betrayal by three young Sanhedrin members has been cut. The play is now entirely in line with C. S. Lewis's admonition that "God chose [the Jews] for the vehicle of His own Incarnation, and [Christians] are indebted to Israel beyond all possible repayment." The Jews in the play are identifiably Jewish, yes: but that applies every bit as much to Jesus, his mother, and his followers as to the members of the Sanhedrin and the fickle crowd.

Of course, even Lewis's formulation would scarcely be congenial to Jewish sensibilities. Shapiro phrases the problem with striking lucidity: "For all the ecumenical attention to a shared spiritual heritage, the play forces Jews and Christians to face the painful fact that they read differently, and that a single version of the founding story of Christianity cannot be comfortably shared." A happenstance of scheduling in 1990 led me to an instructive comparison between the Passion Play and another immense Teutonic musico-dramatic work, Wagner's *Ring*. The two differ in many ways, but the most important difference is that, whatever the emotional and symbolic truth conveyed by *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, few if any who attend it believe that mortals and immortals named Wotan, Brünnhilde, Siegfried, and so on actually did the things ascribed to them; whereas it appears that only a handful of those who attend *Das Passionsspiel der Gemeinde Oberammergau* do not at some level believe that Jesus of Nazareth was both a man born of woman and the Second Person of the Trinity.

What else these spectators may draw from the play is what Shapiro set out to explore. He is a theater historian particularly interested in the way art has affected Gentiles' attitudes toward Jews, and he saw in the Passion Play "a rare opportunity" to engage that issue. He approaches it both historically and through the present antagonists: Jews who object to the play; Oberammergauers who wanted it to remain exactly as they had always known it; and Oberammergauers who saw a need for change, notably Otto Huber and Christian Stückl, the text editor and stage director, respectively, for both 1990 and 2000.

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Jesus has a look of seeing events twice: once before his eyes, once unfolding in memory.

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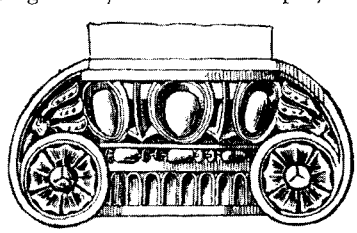
Shapiro cites accounts by earlier playgoers who were horrified or transported, according to their perspective, by the power of the crowd shouting "Crucify him!" He himself found, when attending a read-through of the 2000 play, that "it was contagious: At several points I had to fight the impulse to join in."



The play is indeed powerful. I was still unchurched in 1990, and I did not know the Passion narratives well. But the friend I saw the play with had participated in the Passion reading every Palm Sunday and Good Friday from childhood on (and, yes, had been part of the mob chanting "Crucify him!"). She was not expecting any surprises. And yet the performance left her in a semi-trance. Seeing the story physically enacted gave it a dimension she had never experienced before.

But the main thing she, and I, carried away from the play was not any sense of Jewish wickedness. Rather, it was the overwhelming impression that, no matter what is being done to him or for him, Jesus is in control. He has a look—as he rides in triumph into Jerusalem; as he breaks bread with his disciples; as he stands before the rationalist Roman Pilate, who is trying gamely to make sense of this stubborn Israelite—of seeing events twice: once before his eyes, once unfolding in memory. (It comes as no surprise to learn that the text is based most heavily on John's Gospel.)

The thing I found most shocking ten years ago, although it has warrant in Matthew 27, was the sympathetic portrayal of Judas. Increasingly exasperated by his leader's refusal to be the sort of Messiah he had expected, he is driven over the brink by "For ye have the poor always with you." Having betrayed him, Judas watches in horror as Jesus, instead of being thrown into prison for a few days, is led away to be crucified. Judas's frantic efforts to undo the damage he has done in haste and anger should send a frisson of recognition through most of us.

James Shapiro had his own shock of recognition when he started planning his visit to Germany: "Without saying it in so many words, I believed in collective German guilt . . . The irony . . . was not lost on me." But in Oberammergau he sees "no trace of those attitudes [of the Hitler era] in any of the people" he meets. Besides the read-through, he attends an in-depth rehearsal of a few scenes, including the Last Supper. This season, for the first time, Jesus gives the blessing in Hebrew. Shapiro notices that the words have been garbled; when he says as much, the actors, instead of taking offense, ask him to teach them to say the blessing correctly—which, not without misgivings, he does. And then: "We all smiled and shook hands. . . . I told them how much I looked forward to returning in seven months and hearing it again during the first performance"—although Shapiro's final thoughts that evening were for an Oberammergauer who, 61 years before, had been sent off to Dachau.

Most of the half-million people who attend the Passion Play this year will not share James Shapiro's perspective. But we can be grateful to him for illuminating this portrayal of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension in ways I had not imagined when I first picked up his book. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Capital Punishment—Oppose What?

NEW YORK, JUNE 16

CONFUSION increases on the question of capital punishment, and almost every day positions, arguments, and pleas make their way to the public square and the tensions on the political campaign increase. Most recently, Candidate Gore has taken the rather evasive position that DNA tests should be executed in any legal situation in which capital punishment threatens. What is interesting on this point is: Can Congress impose such a qualifier on state procedures? Or is it expected that this should be a new guideline governing federal appellate courts reviewing capital cases?

What is losing ground in the current argument is the moral question. Carl M. Cannon, a distinguished reporter and essayist, leads off in NATIONAL REVIEW with a sustained and vigorous attack on capital punishment and glosses over the moral question, giving the reader case after case of historical examples of failed justice. In some cases, Mr. Cannon personally and nobly figured in effecting true justice.

But what is the discerning public to do when confronted with such a sentence as this: "And now, thanks to several high-profile cases in which condemned men were exonerated, and thanks to the added tool of DNA evidence, the true horror of the death penalty has made itself plain." But whatever is horrifying about the death penalty has nothing whatever to do with the question of whether it was misapplied.

Mr. Cannon holds Gov. Bush to his statement that he is convinced that not one of the 134 persons executed while he has been governor of Texas was innocent. But here is how the argument proceeds, on which Republicans in the campaign will need to express themselves:

1. It is correct that government is frail and often irresponsible. Mr. Cannon bids for conservative attention by writing that "the courts are just a branch of government, and one that by design has less accountability than the other two." He drives the point home: "If ideology and experience lead one to the conclusion that government is by nature inefficient and inept, then why should it be astonishing that the actions of one branch of government—the judicial branch—are so routinely wrong?"

Now that argument pleads the grievous mistake of putting life-and-death questions in the hands of such fallible instruments as prosecutors, jurors, and judges. It does not touch at all on the question: Does the state, acting to avenge the victim and heighten the deterrent factor, properly and defensibly exercise the right to execute the guilty?

2. The American Left is one constituent in a worldwide movement that rejects capital punishment. That rejection is a position held also by the Vatican, a position the Left reverently adduces, while holding itself free and clear of any correlative Vatican position on life and death where the objective is to protect lives unquestionably innocent, residing in mothers' wombs. Many conservatives tend instinctively to oppose any enlargement of the authority of appellate courts to review capital sentences for the very understandable reason that they view many of these measures as attempted circumventions of the very idea of capital punishment.

But the question is now repeatedly raised: How can you proceed to execute John when you now know that you were about to execute James, and James turned out to be innocent? It can be thought of as something of a metaphysical question: If the judiciary process can err, then judicial findings should not authorize conclusive remedies.

The arguments of such as Mr. Cannon aren't supercilious. They are opportunistic. If the political candidates are willing to say that no guilt warrants execution, they should use those words, and make their public case with the relevant distinctions observed.

"No other gods before You?—That's going to make us look pretty intolerant."

Die to Enrich Government?

NEW YORK, JUNE 13

SOME weeks ago, as remarked in this space, there was a congressional vote on whether to tax elderly people who wanted to work without forfeiting Social Security in consequence. Lo! the House thought about it and the Senate thought about it and they voted to abolish the surtax. It is good that the reform was enacted. But what especially surprised is that something so manifestly welcome should have taken so long to enact. If 100 senators think it's a very good idea, what were 100 senators doing in the 70 years since the obnoxious levy was devised?

It is so, or should be so, in the matter of the repeal of the estate tax, which suddenly arose from the ashes and was voted overwhelming approval by the House (279–136). What is it that brought to the attention of our legislature the odiousness of a tax on accumulated funds?

The ready answer is—political pressure. But one legislator, Nick Joe Rahall (D., W.V.), said he was voting in favor of elimination on "moral" grounds. One might yelp with joy at such a statement—that it is morally wrong to exact death duties, let alone at confiscatory levels (the federal estate tax kicks in with a top rate of 55 percent at $675,000). What are the philosophical reasons for depriving a family of its savings? Why can't they pass on from the parents to their children without a huge forfeit? A forfeit of a size one would expect if, after a man's death, it were proved that he had in fact stolen all the money from American Express.

Congressional views on the question have ventilated all the obvious points. The man who died with $2 million had paid an income tax on the money; paid capital gains, if relevant; paid dividend tax, if the money was spun off as dividend. So why another tax?

If only questions of justice were relevant, there would be no argument: You should not, on dying, trigger an extra penalty than the end of your life.

A look at the extra-moral point prompts one to ask: How important is a death tax as revenue? Over the past years, the death tax has yielded less than

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2 percent of federal revenues. That makes it insignificant as a revenue raiser, retraining attention on the question of justice and injustice.

Opponents of the elimination of the tax jump greedily at prospective revenues. Ten years from now, at current rates, the tax would bring in $50 billion. What that says, in more direct language, is that an increasingly affluent America is going to mean more millionaires on deathbeds. But even so, the point is another way of saying that an extra $50 billion in revenue for the feds is a good thing, irrespective of where the money comes from.

How much time is given to weighing the economic consequences on human behavior caused by the confiscatory tax? A $2 million family will not go gladly into leaving half the money to the government. What else to do with it?

The tax is an encouragement to profligate spending. If the government will otherwise take it, why not suspend normal rules of husbandry and buy race horses?

A more serious argument is raised by those who argue that enrichment at compound rates encourages top-heavy social and economic leverage. If J. D. Rockefeller and heirs get richer and richer (the argument goes), they will draw from finite wells, and impoverish other potentially successful entrepreneurs.

The last generation has amply destroyed that assumption. More and more people are rich, but so are more and more people rising to high levels of income. Does it harm America if millionaires become multimillionaires? Are there new laws we need to enact to prevent the millionaires from asphyxiating other potential millionaires?

Some dissenters have said that to provide substantial relief would mean a great diminution in contributions to colleges and museums. That is a very old saw, played tearfully in the 1980s, when the top income-tax rate was reduced to 28 percent. What in fact happened was a rise of nearly 28 percent in the real level of philanthropic giving between 1982 and 1989.

It is odd that so many who formulate their case against eliminating the estate tax talk about a reform for the benefit of "so few." If that is so, why don't we think of it as a tax designed to hurt so few? Something on the order of a bill of attainder.

Sixty-five Democrats lined up with the Republicans on the vote. Clinton, of course, threatens to veto. Mrs. Clinton should be asked how, in the Senate, she would vote on the reform.

Peter McWilliams, R.I.P.

NEW YORK, JUNE 20

PETER MCWILLIAMS is dead. Age? 50. Profession? Author, poet, publisher. Particular focus of interest? The federal judge in California (George King) would decide in a few weeks how long a sentence to hand down, and whether to send McWilliams to prison or let him serve his sentence at home. What was his offense? He collaborated in growing marijuana plants. What was his defense?

Well, the judge wouldn't allow him to plead his defense to the jury. If given a chance, the defense would have argued that under Proposition 215, passed into California constitutional law in 1996, infirm Californians who got medical relief from marijuana were permitted to use it. The judge also forbade any mention that McWilliams suffered from AIDS and got relief from the marijuana.

What was he doing when he died?

Vomiting. The vomiting hit him while in his bathtub, and he choked to death.

Was there nothing he might have done to still the impulse to vomit? Yes, he could have taken marijuana; but the judge's bail terms forbade him to do so and he submitted to urine tests to confirm that he was living up to the terms of his bail.

Did anybody take note of the risk he was undergoing? He took Marinol, a proffered, legal substitute, but reported after using it that it worked for him only about one-third of the time. When it didn't work, he vomited.

Was there no public protest against the judge's ruling?

Yes. On June 9, the television program *20/20* devoted a segment to the McWilliams plight. Commentator John Stossel summarized: "McWilliams is out of prison on the condition that he not smoke marijuana, but it was the marijuana that kept him from vomiting up his medication. I can understand that the federal drug police don't agree with what some states have decided to do about medical marijuana, but does that give them the right to just end-run those laws and lock people up?"

Shortly after the trial last year, Charles Levendosky, writing in the *Ventura County Star*, summarized: "The cancer treatment resulted in complete remission." But only the marijuana gave him sustained relief from the vomiting that proved mortal.

Is it being said, in plain language, that the judge's obstinacy resulted in killing McWilliams?

Yes. The Libertarian party press release has made exactly that charge. "McWilliams was prohibited from using medical marijuana—and being denied access to the drug's anti-nausea properties almost certainly caused his death."

Reflecting on the judge's refusal to let the jury know that there was understandable reason for McWilliams to believe he was acting legally, I ended a column in this space in November by writing, "So, the fate of Peter McWilliams is in the hands of Judge King. Perhaps the cool thing for him to do is delay a ruling for a few months, and just let Peter McWilliams die." Well, that happened last week, on June 14.

The struggle against a fanatical imposition of federal laws on marijuana will continue, as also on the question whether federal laws can stifle state initiatives. Those who believe that marijuana laws are insanely misdirected have a martyr.

He was a wry, mythogenic guy, humorous, affectionate, articulate, shrewd, sassy. He courted anarchy, at the moral level. His most recent book (his final book) was *Ain't Nobody's Business If You Do*. We were old friends, and I owe my early conversion to word processing to his guidebook on how to do it. Over the years we corresponded, and he would amiably twit my conservative opinions. When I judged him to have gone rampant on his own individualistic views in his book, I wrote him to that effect. I cherish his reply: nice acerbic deference, the supreme put-down.

"Please remember the Law of Relativity as applied to politics: In order for you to be right, at least *someone else* must be wrong. Your rightness is only shown in relation to the other's wrongness. Conversely, your rightness is necessary for people like me to look truly wrong. Before Bach, people said of bad organ music, 'That's not quite right.' After Bach, people said flatly, 'That's wrong.' This allowed dedicated composers to grow, and cast the neophytes back to writing how-to-be-happy music. So, thank me for my wrongness, as so many reviews of my book will doubtless say, 'People should read more of a truly great political commentator: William F. Buckley Jr.'"

Imagine such a spirit ending its life at 50, just because they wouldn't let him have a toke. We have to console ourselves with only the comment of the two prosecutors. They said they were "saddened" by Peter McWilliams's death. Many of us are; by his death and by the causes of it.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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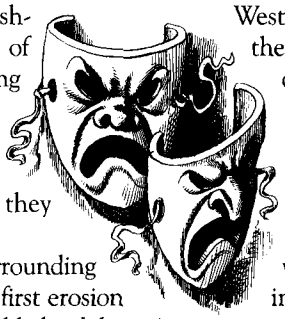
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

FOR as long as I can remember, "sensible" has been the word most often used to describe the English. Despite their dotty vicars, unleashed doggy ladies, and the residual feyness evident in their pub hours, when all was said and done, the world called them "sensible."

It had to do with their unique cheerful stuffiness, which enabled them to spot the false and the foolish instantly and discard everything but the humor. To hear a supremely confident Englishman dismiss something out of hand with a single withering retort was to know that "sensible" was a virtual synonym for Englishness. There was no doubt about it; they owned the word.



No more. The hysteria surrounding the death of Diana was the first erosion to strike this green and sensible land, but now comes an obtuse bureaucracy to finish plowing it under. Tony Blair's munchkins in the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport recently issued a directive ordering state-supported museums and art galleries to see to it that at least 12 percent of their visitors are minorities, or else lose their funding.

Once upon a time, this would have made the entire country rise up as one and huff "Nonsense!" in the best gouty-squire tradition, but Cool Britannia discourages the temperament associated with gouty squires. So far the only classic English rejoinder has come from the conservative Lord Tebbit. "My first reaction is one of joy," he said, "because those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad, and these ideas have been fermented in minds which are gravely imbalanced."

For the rest, stunned curators and directors are huddling, trying to figure out how to rustle up enough homeboy aesthetes to fill their quotas, hoping desperately that they will be allowed to count Jews, and wondering if putting up signs reading "To the Egress" would be the best way to get rid of surplus whites.

The sheer impossibility of coping with the logistics has so dominated their minds that no one has stopped to consider a much more sensitive aspect of the controversy, one so sensitive that we can only marvel that Tony Blair's quivering antennae missed it.

The ruling, reports the London *Daily Telegraph*, is "intended to stimulate interest in the nation's heritage among young blacks and Asians." All right. Suppose they do start going to museums. What will they see but the entire canon of Western culture spread out before them? Canon to the right of them, canon to the left of them, masses of dead white males raining down on them, all shot out of the same canon:

Fragonard—Satin-clad white people without a care in the world, frolicking the hours away in verdant copses pruned by somebody else.

Romney and Gainsborough—White ladies of leisure in big hats and lace fichus, all of whom look entirely capable of saying, "Beulah, peel me a grape."

The Venetian School—Noble white ladies being fanned by their personal "blackamoors," who are dressed as caliphs and carrying the pet monkey.

Dutch Genre Painters—White people who demand spotless kitchen floors.

The Elgin Marbles—White people robbing white people of people even whiter.

Nativities, Annunciations, and Crucifixions—White Christians far in excess of the white-Christian quota. These are the same haloed people whom the museum directors are trying to steer toward the Egress exhibit.

Brueghel—Mobs of beer-swilling poor white trash, all of them falling-down drunk.

It all adds up to neo-imperialism in the service of inclusion, but left-wingers have never been in the habit of thinking their brainstorms through. I will bet that whoever dreamed up the 12 percent ukase was captive to the Shining Faces syndrome. This is the theme of cultural-messiah stories such as *To Sir, with Love* or Pat Conroy's *Conrack*. An idealistic teacher takes a job in the slums and resolves to introduce the dregs of society to the finer things in life; after a semester of crisis-laden field trips, he is rewarded when his Verdi-humming, van Gogh-digging charges decorously take their seats on the last day of school and gaze up with shining faces—at him.

How can England's shell-shocked museum directors fill their minority quotas? My sympathies are with them, because as a college student I had a summer job selling prints and postcards at the National Gallery of Art and I know something about what museum people have to put up with. I also feel a certain sympathy for the minorities, thanks to my baseball-loving mother, who formed her opinion of museums while dating my cultivated father: "They're full of dumb pictures."

I have therefore devised a plan to help both the directors and the minorities over the quota hump. Italy has professional mourners for hire to the friendless or kinless who want someone to pull out all the stops at their funerals. Why couldn't enterprising British minorities shake down the government and hire themselves out as professional culture vultures and get paid for hanging out in museums?

To turn street kids into convincing museum visitors, the directors could start a school, like Fagin, to teach the reluctant aesthetes everything they need to know about looking at art. How to step back and shutter the eyes, squeeze the bridge of the nose, measure with an erect thumb, pace up and down, and master an ethereal vocabulary ("infinity," "spatial," "vastness," etc.) so they can do a quick shining-face number in case Tony Blair's cultural messiahs show up unannounced at the latest exhibit.

England is finished. I thought we would go first, but I was wrong. It's a relief in a way, because I am now rid of the longing that used to come over me back when *Upstairs, Downstairs* was showing. I watched it twice every week, once on each PBS channel. I wanted to walk into that house and never come out; it was a microcosm of a sane society that I craved so much I would have even changed places with Ruby. Afterward, I would get depressed and think about emigrating, but now that the green and sensible land is no more—I don't have to look for the Egress. **NR**

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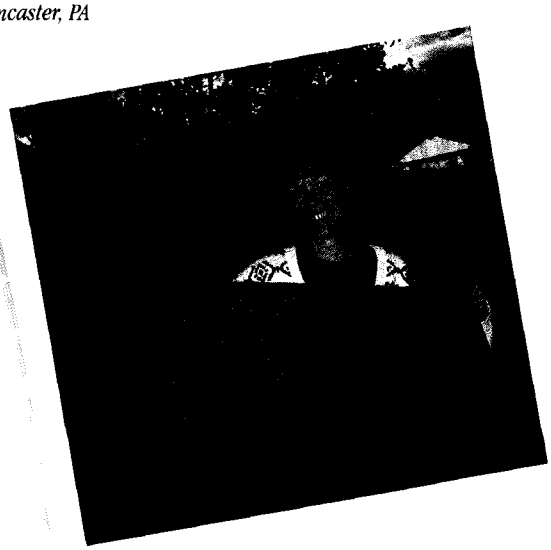

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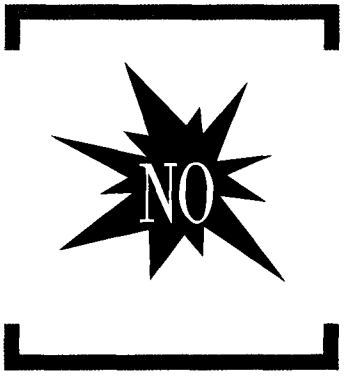

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